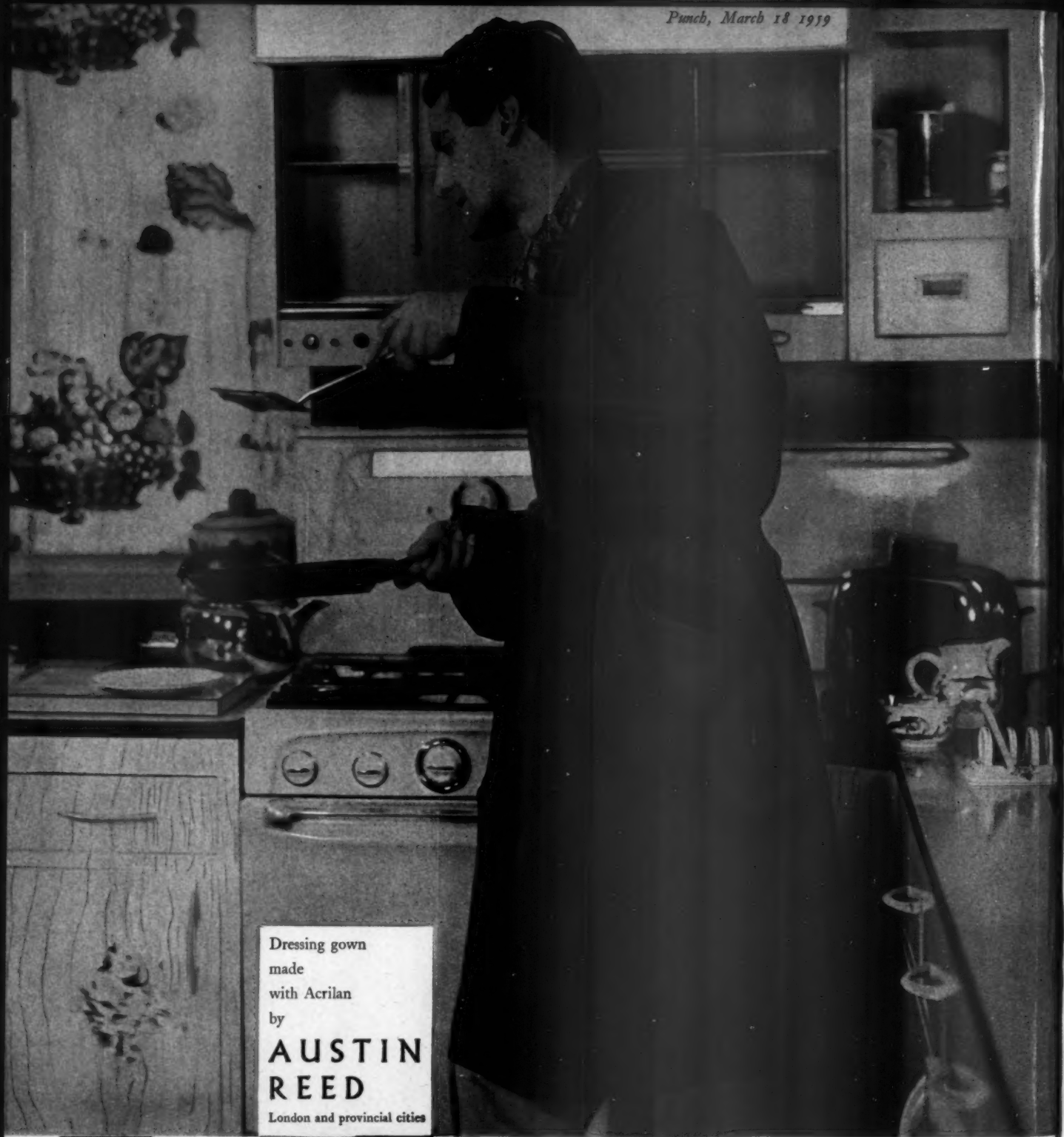


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Punch





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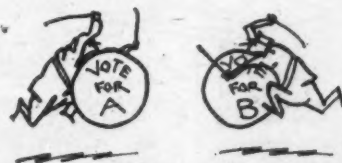
N

The London Charivari

NORMAL women, at the mere glimpse of a telephone, move into a conception of Time as measured by Relativity. Hitherto, telephone operators have been gagged by regulation; now that they are to be friendly instead of terse by order I fear the worst. If womanly sympathy is to flow all day ("It's too bad the way that dreary subscriber keeps not answering") the proper use of the instrument, which is for brief matters of urgency ("Buy Antofagastat," "Cancel the funeral, the coroner's getting inquisitive," "A pony on Pegasus, to win, 3.30, Uttoxeter"), will pass into that outer oblivion of the Land of No Reply.

Celtic Twilight

CONNOISSEURS of national characteristics felt heavy-hearted over the news that there would be a "straight fight" at



East Belfast. What's happened to the good old days when they used to ask "Can anyone join in?"

Keep it Under Your Hat

I DON'T think I ever felt sympathy for a jewel thief before, until I read about Lady Docker's—or rather, I imagine, Lady Docker's insurance company's—loss. "We take the jewellery with us," Lady Docker is quoted as saying, "because we think it is safer, but where is it safe to-day?" Well, if Lady Docker thinks it is safe under a

rug on the back seat of a Rolls bearing her initials and parked in a street, I can offer one or two suggestions. Why not, for instance, wrapped in a newspaper and hidden under a tree in the Green Park? Or given into the care of a trusty Irish labourer on the site of the new Shell building? Or tucked away behind the bottles in the bar of a night-club?

Like Father Used to Make

UNLESS the Army can recruit two thousand more cooks, says a catering



spokesman, it will "have to revert to the old system of having unskilled men in the cookhouse." National Servicemen are querying that "revert."

Non-Stop Progress

THE closure to passenger traffic of some three or four hundred stations in the London Midland Region of British Railways was prophesied last night by the general manager . . . So casual a news item but, to the keen bargain-hunter, so richly fraught with possibilities. Three or four hundred footbridges, three or four hundred waiting-room stoves (scarcely used), six or eight hundred platforms, fifty thousand yards best quality fretted canopy, if that is the name for it, upwards of twelve hundred excursion leaflet holders with "Please Take One" inscribed in the stationmaster's own hand—the



mind reels at the thought of so wholesale a scattering of long-cherished railway property. And will there, when the three (or four) hundredth station closes its ticket-office for the last (though by no means the first) time, be any places left in the whole Midland Region at which passengers may enter or alight from the splendid diesel-electric trains that will then be flashing about the country? Probably not. But never mind. "This pruning of passenger stations," my newspaper explains, "is part of the drive to make the region more efficient."

Small World

THE political correspondent of *The Times*, lamenting the lack of funds to provide M.P.s with the educational benefits of foreign travel, recalls that a Minister of the Crown once described Hong Kong as a peninsula and spoke of British Honduras as a Caribbean island. It certainly looks as if the House of Commons Library ought to cough up enough funds for a decent atlas.

The Titipu Story

THE petition asking the Government to take over the Savoy operas when the copyright runs out in 1961, and save them from the ingenious and the mercenary, is the architectural debate all over again: to preserve the past or imitate it by constant restoration? Luckily, as you can have many different

productions of the same piece but only one building on the same site the choice is not quite so agonizing. Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* and *My Fair Lady* do not get in the way of *The Beggar's Opera* and *Pygmalion*. We can have both the Savoy tradition, with Koko poking his toe down with his fan and the cast pronouncing "merry" in that characteristic way in one theatre, and next door the full range of experiment from Old Vic or Glyndebourne productions to *avant-garde* revelations of Sullivan's derisive modernity and the latent savagery of Gilbert.

Foreign Office Material

FIVE Lancashire children who ran away from school and went to Bournemouth because there was too much homework told a reporter that they didn't want to be expelled . . . "We just hope they will ask us to leave." This sort of subtle distinction, so young, presages five brilliant careers in diplomacy.

The Elephant Never Forgotten

THOUGH the Elephant and Castle, tavern which commanded the greatest hub of road-spokes in South London, is closed for ever, its name will endure as a tube station, bus stop and neighbourhood. I can but dimly remember the Angel, Islington, as a pub—they sell tea there now—but the title

survives on road signs and maps. Further south in London the Swan, Stockwell, and Plough, Clapham, are still colloquial staging posts, though the austere Underground now calls them Stockwell and Clapham Common. The Elephant was named after a mammoth skeleton dug up near the site, where a flint-headed spear also lay; chivs are more likely to be found at the next dig. It is an unquiet area and when there were theatres there (hence "transpontine drama") the line from *Twelfth Night* "In the south suburbs, at the Elephant, is best to lodge," was always sure of a laugh.

VistaVision

A railway journalist complains that the new, splendid, London to Manchester diesel-electric express will have no observation car. However, special arrangements are being made for passengers to be able to see out of the ordinary windows.

Comfortable Bodies

IN the new Disney film of *Kidnapped* there are to be no girls, and the women will be motherly types. This will not come so hard on the script-writers as having to make all the men fatherly; but it will need ingenuity. The good-looking lass who helps the fugitives at the inn will have to be replaced by a beaming, elderly ale-wife. The old hobbling woman whom Alan and David hear bemoaning herself as they lay in the heather could be worked up until she is cooking them bannocks and bathing their feet. Mrs. Rankeillour can press mounds of food on David at dinner instead of appearing in the first half of a sentence and disappearing after the semicolon. The stout, dark, sour-looking woman who showed David the way to the House of Shaws, whose face lit up with malignant anger as she cried "Blood built it; blood stopped the building of it; blood shall bring it down," is going to be a good deal tougher for the Disney studios to maternalize.

— MR. PUNCH

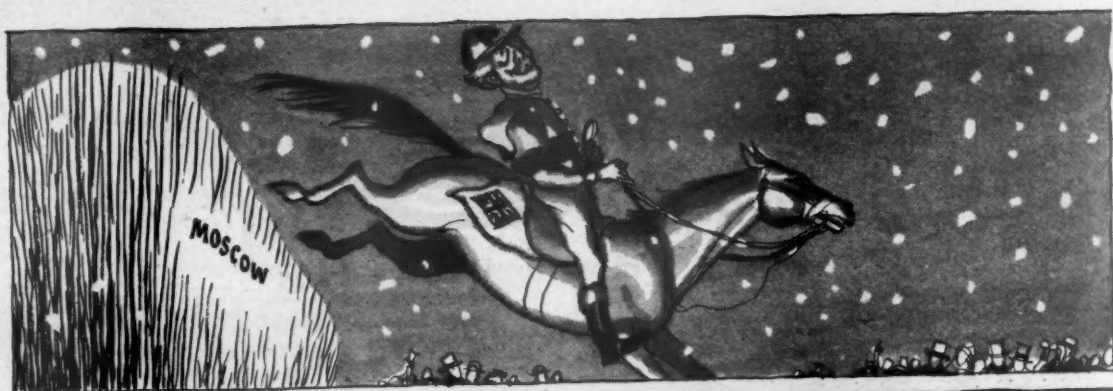


"Yes, but you can't have a jolly good cry in a bowling alley."

SPORTING PRINTS

Hewison's subject next week will be

CHRISTINE TRUMAN



GRAND INTERNATIONAL

CRADLE TO UNIVERSITY



5 The Eleven Plus

By GWYN THOMAS

THIS is the most morbid twitch on the national face. It is a springtime thrust of shame and panic that almost makes the daffodils duck back for cover. It has loosened more moral hinges and case-hardened more neuroses than any of the terrors that wait so lavishly upon childhood.

And there is no chink in the present set-up through which any gleam of complacency can shine. It is hard to know how many of our current motives will have been plucked out by the end of the present century. Some of the idiocies of racial and tribal pride will, on grounds of sheer caution or hoarseness, have learned to bawl less raucously. Social snobberies, from the top as well as the bottom, may well have embarrassed each other out of existence. Television might well have achieved some paralysing climax of tedium that will allow a book or two to share the altar of the artisans with coupons and ale. People demanding (or even submitting to) quiz shows will be whipped off to rest-camps in Alaska, and the compère of "This is Your Life" could well be stabbed by some outraged recluse, the last person left unexposed to this horrific X-ray.

But that tough little bomb, the Eleven Plus, will go banging on. No decent Fabian week-end school, no clutch of reformers in spate of talk or dream, will forgo this mouthful of bitter-sweet herb, the deepest and most hurtful wound of the egalitarian, the most irreducible cud of contention ever to bruise the human gum. As peace and darkness fall over the citadels of one after another of our uncertainties, as weariness persuades our specialized rancours to shut up and go home, we shall still be charging up and down the plain of educational theory to decide how best to deploy our adolescents in the

available desks and the conceivable curricula. Minds will still be split and hearts will still be chafed wondering how best to keep the wheat of super-talent sweet while not sneezing too hard over our cherished chaff.

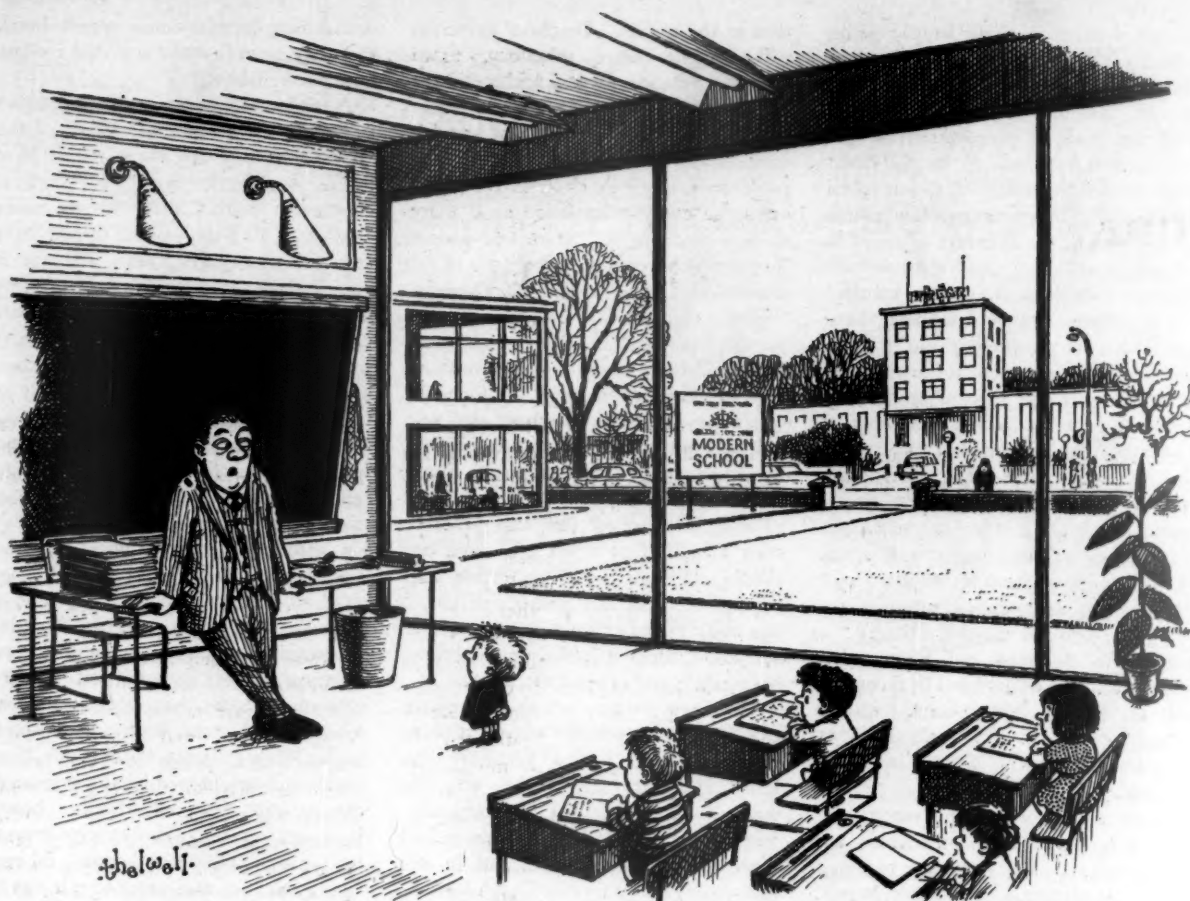
Nothing indicates quite as clearly as this the extent of our social revolution. Surely thirty years ago there was not the same frenetic anxiety on the part of parents to see their children wear a grammar-school blazer. In certain areas where failure to pass meant automatic recruitment into some loathsome and futureless type of toil (like mining) the platoons in Standards 4 and 5 of the elementary school would, in a spasm of self-defensive cunning, go all out to master their tables and get almost by heart the sparse English texts that were the enforced reading in the scholarship year. In my case it was Ballantyne's *The Bell* and we had our noses remorselessly rubbed into this charmless narrative

by the iron Calvinist who taught us. Even to-day that experience can make me frown at the sight of a lighthouse and gives me feelings of active sympathy with coastal wreckers. Many suicide-leaps into the Taff were due to our arithmetical routines. Serious thinkers running their lobes over the many ravaging absurdities that roamed the inter-war years would be driven up the last few remaining inches of the wall by having us come up to them, ripping into their thin fabric with some sum about the sale of fish or the flow-rate of running taps. That last type of sum, featuring enigmatic tanks into and from which water was constantly flowing, must have caused many a brain-cell to blow its door, and promoted more than one mood of rabies among officials of the Water Board.

There was no doubt an intense desire among some parents to see their children use advanced literacy as the



"And there's a bicycle for you too if he gets through the eleven plus."



"It's a good job your mother's looking, Anderson."

fast car of escape from the pit-shaft. The iron Calvinist I mentioned earlier, our teacher in Standard 5, the year of wrath and judgment, was certainly an agent of their wills. If as harsh a driver of the young existed to-day he would be caged and deported by the nearest Parents' Association. He spoke for all the vestry scholars who have emerged from a self-improving peasantry. He worked on our scanty mental top-soil with the zeal of Jethro Tull. He stood before us, dark and definite in his objectives as death, Bostock and Wombell's *Arithmetical Primer* in one hand and Legree's *Handbook for the Whittling of Joy* in the other. Every time we made a lapse of logic or style punishment was at once and barbarous. Not with a stick, not with a swung hand. He would bend and lacerate the tender skin of our eleven-year-old faces with

the razor-sharp stubble of his deterministic chin. I have spent thirty-two years brooding over that manoeuvre and I have still to reach a proper conclusion. But we all passed, with the exception of one boy whose face had been rubbed numb and who no longer cared.

Even so I am sure that the scholarship results of my time did not land on our town to such whoops of ecstasy and with such thuds of crippling dismay as to-day. Shortly before the war, doing some vague bit of social research in the Midlands and the North (I claim to have misled more statisticians in this field than even small print and short sight), I found myself in areas that still had an early Saxon, acorn sort of flavour when discussing further education. Time and again, in talk with them, I kept detecting an astonishing pre-Dickensian hum in their mores. Most parents seemed to

regard the grammar school as a comic intrusion and felt socially normal only when Johnny came home dirty and profitable.

But the war, the raised school-age, more complex productive techniques, and the greater premium on social smoothness have made even these genial troglodytes interested in a longer skull and a brighter light. The grammar school to-day is a more golden grail than ever it was before. The great majority of our secondary modern schools are still shabby extensions of the old elementary school. In them the army of 14-plus pupils sit in varying degrees of comatose and rather sinister boredom. You can have on a staff the finest set of educational idealists since Arnold; if the architecture of your school is early-workhouse or late-prison, if your rooms are scaly and ill-equipped, your

average product is quite simply going to be a more bumptious and refractory type of moron than left the pre-1944 schools. As long as that fact remains true, the years of preparation for the 11-plus will continue to be the most aperient and depressing of all our social disciplines. The grammar-school places will be fought for like bits of meat in a beleaguered city. And they will be digested with the same uneven results.

Too many primary schools have yielded to a creeping panic in this business. The more ardent the ambition of the parents the more a scholarship class will be regarded by its teacher as a squadron to be launched into battle. During the first term of the examination year the ideal of a broad, loose-fitting curriculum is allowed to breathe a little. A few relics will be brought in to spark off an interest in local history: the odd frog, passed around, will underline a point or two of natural history; a snatch of "Nymphs and Shepherds" will be heard from the band of recorder-players. But the second term, with the test grinning like a death's head at winter's end, opens with a whiff of sulphur.

From that moment the commando course is on. The inessentials are sheared away. The gruesome two-step of mathematics and English has begun. Endless tests, based on past papers, are

shot at the pupils. Teachers' criticism will become more minatory, more intense. Sums in mental arithmetic are devised of a speed and complexity that must explain the large seam of knavish foxiness and immorality in many of our contemporaries. A child is taught to approach every proposition as if there were a catch in it. If this is proper instruction for children barely out of the shawl then I am truly a monkey's uncle.

Some children will happily survive, for that bland habit is deeply ingrained. Some will become zombies, still muttering answers at the age of forty to questions about the purchase and sale of ducks put to them thirty years before by some panel of smug reckoners. Some will doubt, then reject, the whole basis of a social contract that can generate such a black fuss at an age when life should still be an experiment in non-stop euphoria. This last group will either run away to sea or save up the fee that will allow them to change their name, nationality, and general direction.

The age factor in this entrance examination is good for a laugh or two. Before the war it was generally and sensibly agreed that twelve was the minimum age for entry into the grammar school. This has been more and more disastrously relaxed, and in our first-year groups now we have figures, faces and voices so infantile that it is

only during the mid-morning milk-break that they seem to make any vital contact with the syllabus.

A frightening pressure of expectation is developing around the heads of the young. In my day there might have been homework and coaching at elementary school level, but we never saw any. To-day these things have come in a sombre flood. No age is regarded as too young for the gloomy penance of extra-mural study. One sees children of five going to school with minute satchels on their backs, their eyes wrinkled anxiously on the day of decision six years ahead. Often these bijou satchels do service throughout a child's whole school career, and many a tall grammar-school stripling has been asked on this account if he is now doing his homework on microfilm. If this tendency is maintained we shall have children being born with some type of leather addendum stamped by Mendel.

Intensive coaching, possible in an examination that repeats itself roughly, year in, year out, has landed grammar schools with some utterly inscrutable birds. They arrive on the first day, their minds still brightened by the labours of the cut-rate Svengali who has blown them to a top mental heat of forty degrees for the day. They will normally be very communicative and eager to put you in touch with the bits of information they had no chance to use in the examination. "Excuse me, sir, how deep is the Pacific?" One does not know; he does, to the inch. "Excuse me, sir, how can one see the stars by day?" He explains how and you tell him to go and do just that. After half a dozen such queries he will give a short gasp and slump forward. He is a spent force. For the next five years he will neither ask nor answer any question at all. He will either be demoted to a secondary modern school or he will, with the slug-like rub of his trapped frame, patiently wear out a desk that some apter boy could have put to better use.

Any honest operator in a grammar school will admit that while he gets the best he does not get all the best. The present examination is a most defective sieve. You have only to look at the tribe of mental recusants that forms mid-way through a grammar-school course to know that. One approves the search for better methods of selection, although one blinks with wonder that the idea of



"I'm sorry, but it's more than my job's worth to allow a valuable article like that out of the museum."



leisurely, spaced tests should not years ago have replaced the folly of that climactic and nerve-scratching single day. One hears astonishing rumours. We know that the strongest trends in education to-day are somewhat illiberal, aimed at the ideal of some massive and monstrous workshop. But one is still surprised that some authorities are seriously regarding the English essay as an unfair test and intend piling on those tedious arithmetical puzzles. And they will become ever more ingenious and taxing. Verbal coherence and an athletic imagination will count for less than ever. Sheer mathematical fluency, which can be found, significantly enough, in children of seven or eight, will be king. Children of ten and eleven will be confronted with this sort of thing (a genuine and characteristic sample)—

Supply the missing number:

9	8	7	6	5	4
46	94	63	52	61	

Even if by some act of lightning luck the child should pierce to the heart of this nonsense, one's head sinks a little to know that grown people should be capable of such quaint deviousness.

I am sincerely glad to be middle-aged.

Other contributors to this series will be:
The Rev. MARCUS MORRIS
The Rev. SIMON PHIPPS
R. G. G. PRICE
PAUL REILLY
C. H. ROLPH
ALAN ROSS
JOHN TAYLOR
SIR JOHN WOLFENDEN



Solidarity

By ALEX ATKINSON

WE are not half giving D—a time of it, I can tell you. (I am not allowed to write his name out in full, as it is against the Rules.) He has been in Coventry a month now, and the only chap who has spoken to him is Jack, who said to him in a forgetful moment "Stop banging me on the foot with that large hammer like that or I will tell on you." Jack has been warned proper for this breach of solidarity, and if he does it again there will have to be a meeting of the Careless Talk Investigation Sub-Committee, because that's not the way we won the war. I do not think he will have a chance to do it again in a hurry,

though, as he has been off ever since then with a bad foot.

After the third week a problem cropped up, as we found out by a roundabout way that D—'s missus had had to be carted off with a nervous breakdown (she was always a bit on the frail side), and the question was, would it be in order for Ned, who works next to D—, to ask him how his missus was getting on, as she used to sometimes send us in jam tarts? In the end we voted to let Ned pass a slip of paper to D—, with "How is your missus?" written on it. At the bottom it said "R.S.V.P.," and there was a space for reply, but the first morning all D—



FOURTEEN YEARS OF
HARD GRAFT, AND WHAT
HAVE I GOT TO SHOW FOR IT?



HARRY BROWN M.P.,
BACK BENCHER, NOBODY



UNDER THE THUMBS OF
HEAD OFFICE AND LOCAL
CAUCUS. OVERLOOKED
FOR EVERY JOB



ONLY TWO APPEARANCES
ON THE TELLY IN FOURTEEN
LOUSY YEARS. FIVE LETTERS
TO 'THE TIMES' AND ONE SHORT
TRADE MISSION



put was "It will take more than you lice to kill her properly," so after that Ned never even passed him the slip of paper, because discourtesy is no way to carry on.

Earlier on than that, in the second week or it may have been in the first week, we didn't half have some fun over D—, because Cartwright brought in a needle and thread off his missus one morning, and when D— took off his overalls to go and have a shower we sewed up the ends of the legs so when he put his foot in his foot wouldn't go through the hole at the end because the hole at the end had been sewn up with this needle and thread that Cartwright had got off his missus, and he didn't know what was up for the minute. Old Alfie Lummocks laughed so much he squirted grease all over a reciprocating dog-tooth elliptical cam-sprocket and clogged it, and part of it dripped into D—'s tea and sugar but he never said nothing because he's got no sense of humour to speak of. Another time Lug

Phillips made us all badges out of scrap tin in his own time, and soldered pins on the back of them, and on the front of them he painted on "D— is Soft," and we all had them pinned under our lapels, and whenever we went past D— we turned our lapel back so he could see the badge. They were sprayed and everything, and Lug says the next one we send to Coventry we could easy block out the "D—" on them and paint in whoever else's name it was, like if it was Harrison it would say "Harrison is Soft," instead of D—, although nobody's thought up a proper reason for sending Harrison to Coventry yet.

D— is taking it very well, considering his missus has had to go in a home. Even when we fixed up a landslide in his locker, so that when he went to get something out everything came tumbling down on top of him, he never said nothing but took it like a true Britisher. Let's face it, a true Britisher takes a lot of beating, and no wonder we're a proud race. Not like Heppelwhite, who

we sent to Coventry last year and wouldn't go. He had the brazen nerve to keep on chattering away to everybody from morning to night, until we *had* to talk to him because that was the only way we could tell him to shut up. He ignored the placards we kept parading in front of him with, saying "Heppelwhite Must Hush." He made a proper nuisance of himself, and we were damn glad when he came out of Coventry.

We are going to have more fun with D— before we've finished with him. Some of the lads are go-ing to throw his hat o-ver a ve-ry high wall, and pin a no-tice on his back say-ing "Kick Me!" Oh, how we will chuck-le! And when he is not look-ing I will hide his darts and play-ing cards and oth-er toys in a sec-ret place, and if we are good the fore-man may let us take the air out of his bi-cy-cle tyres. Hoo-ray!

Da-da. Ma-ma. Pus-sy cat.

Ga-ga. Glub.

Ug.

Mac, You Old Gipsy Man

The Butler's Song

MAC, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up with your Cabinet
Just for one day?

Last month in Leningrad,
This week in Bonn:
A week-end at Chequers,
Now Washington.

Is there method or madness
In travel like this?
Or is it pure gladness
To give us a miss?

D'you regard the Election
As settled and done?
Or is this a global
Midlothian run?

As your missions unfurl
On wings of a gull,
Are you Supermac, Mac,
Or John Foster Dull?

Mac, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up with your Cabinet
Just for one day?

— BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



AND ALL FOR £1,750
A YEAR. I'LL PACK IT IN,
RESIGN, EMIGRATE



EVENING, HARRY



BUT I MUSTN'T BE
COWARDLY. PERHAPS IT'S
MY DUTY, MY DESTINY...



After Reading You Know What

Just an extract from a quarter of a million words

By RICHARD MALLETT

18

THE walls of the room were covered with bookshelves. Each of these held many books. In one there was a little gap, like the gap in your comb when it begins to get old and broken.

In a chair in one corner of the room sat Ivan Alexandrovich Putthatin, an inspector of accidents from the Urals who had come to Moscow to live. He had begun to supplement his income by literary criticism. Sometimes on Sunday he would go for long bus-rides by himself, and one of his legs was shorter than the other.

The book he was reading was *Dr. Zhivago*. It was this that had left the gap on one of the shelves. He read very slowly. At long intervals he turned a page, reading what was on the other side. The light was poor.

19

"But what is so noticeable is this continual alternation. I mean the alternation of concrete, pictorial detail with discussion. Heavens, what discussions!"

"What's wrong with them?"

"They go on and on. One speaker expounds a philosophical idea. It may be in two lines. It may be for half a page! With cries of discovery! The other replies, for half a page. And so on.

But if you overlooked the quotation marks you would often think you were reading a somewhat inflated essay, by one person."

"These speeches are carefully considered. I'm sure they are full of meaning. But they have little to do with character. They demand more effort than I wish to make."

"I'm glad to hear you say that. If you hadn't, I should have said it myself. Good heavens! What are we arguing about?"

"We aren't arguing. We're agreeing. It's as you said a few moments ago."

"We are saying the same thing. But the reader has no way of telling which of us is which."

It was six months later. Ivan had finished the book. He had been paid for his review. The other speaker was a childhood friend of his named Olga Andreyevna Droschky. He had met her by chance in the grocer's where he had gone to spend the money.

She had read the book too, rather more quickly. She skipped bits of the discussions. Her son's name was Kolya.

20

Some days later Ivan went for a bus-ride. It was not a Sunday. That would look too much like contrivance by the author. Everything must happen by accident. Ivan took the only remaining

... TO STAY ON AND
FIGHT!



seat on the bus. It was next to a young man who wore his fur hat on one side, so that he looked like a broken candle.

The bus hummed along the road. After a time the young man spoke. He was beginning to grow a moustache.

"Have you read *Dr. Zhivago*?"

"Yes. How extraordinary!"

"What is extraordinary?"

"That you should ask me about this book, which is in my mind constantly. Will you allow me to pay your fare?"

"As an employee of the bus company, I have a free pass. Thank you all the same."

This young man was none other than Kolya, son of Olga Andreyevna. He had recently left the university without taking his degree, and was now working as an assistant clerk.

Ivan saw a football-pitch covered with sheep, and got out of the bus. On one goalpost was a seagull.

21

Among the other passengers in the bus was Mikhail Konstantinovich Guvnor, a provincial librarian who had lost all his books in the hurricane of 1922.

Since then, he had been keeping an inn in the Urals. Ivan had once inspected one of his accidents. When the bus reached the terminus he got out and began to walk back. His felt boots crackled on the dusty road.

After walking for several hours he met Ivan. He had known this would happen.

"The name for it is *chosisme*, isn't it?"

"Perhaps. But I think that is a word of later origin."

"Nevertheless on page 91 we find the word 'psychiatrist.' Was that word known in 1911?"

"I don't suppose it was. Why do you ask?"

"I should like your copy of the book to start my library again. I have come to the conclusion that there is no future in innkeeping. Will you give it to me?"

"Willingly. How strange that you should ask! I had already wrapped it in newspaper, fearing rats."

"You seem to take a gloomy view."

"I am an inspector of accidents."

"Of course! I had forgotten."

They walked together along the road towards Moscow. From time to time they met people they had not seen for many years, and recalled childhood memories. This delayed their progress. It grew dark.

22

Mikhail Konstantinovich followed Ivan into his room. The gap in the shelf had been filled with another book. Ivan went at once to a table in the corner.

"How stupid of me to forget! I gave it away."

"It's of no consequence. Good-bye. I expect we shall meet again."

"That is almost certain."

The street watched the room through the window. Several streets in *Dr. Zhivago* do this. They don't see very much.

Spring Begins at Fifty

By H. F. ELLIS

AT about this time of year there comes, I suppose, to almost every man and woman a strong desire to be elsewhere. The long dark days and the lack of sunlight have taken their toll; so have the long articles by newspaper doctors pointing out what a toll the long dark days have taken. Mind and body cry out for change, for re-creation as the vicar so cleverly puts it. Pictures form in the mind of the place where one would like to be.

My own wants are simple. I require to be leaning over an old stone bridge, within a hundred yards of a white-fronted inn and half an hour of lunch. There must be rising ground somewhere about, with trees in their first leaf and the water that flows beneath the bridge must be shallow, somewhat broken, and free from old hip-baths. The only noise should be bird-song, and not too much of that, the only smell a hint of wood-smoke. The sun shines warmly down on this pleasant picture and after a while, when I have exhausted the immediate delights of running water, an old man comes along and says good-day. There was a time, I dare say, when a young woman would have entered into this springtime dream-sequence, but not now. If fifty young women walked across the bridge, equipped to launch between them a full fifty thousand ships, I should not bother to turn my head, well knowing that they would not in any case bother to turn theirs. What I want now is an old, old man, so old that one look at him makes me feel by comparison almost springy, lissome as a sapling, capable if the mood took me of laying one hand on the parapet and vaulting lightly over into the glancing waters. I want him to doddle and totter as he comes along; yet there must be an aged brightness, a geniality about him, so that he is ready enough to pass the time of day with a stranger and not too dim and rheumy of eye to note the breadth of chest beneath the new Harris tweed jacket, the lounging grace of the



scarcely shrunken limbs, the relaxed strength of a face enriched rather than dishevelled by the etchings of middle-age.

If this does not seem a very amiable or noble wish, this desire for a decrepit foil to heighten my sense of euphoria, it has to be remembered that the long dark days have taken their toll. It is every man for himself in the spring. Nor, in fact, am I doing this old, old man any harm by imagining his presence on the bridge. He will not grudge me the lighter burden of my years, nor be tempted to take a cut with his stick at the less arthritic of my two shapely knees. On the contrary he will be courteous and friendly, as age is to youth, and any envy he may show will certainly be feigned. That is the law of life. If some young stripling of twenty comes striding over the bridge I shall not envy his elastic gait nor grudge the ease with which he carries a folding tent, three blankets, shirts, socks, spirit lamp and other accessories on his back. I shall fall naturally into my more senile role, prepared, if the young man pauses long enough to confide his hopes of being over the Black Mountains before sundown, to adopt an "Ah-me . . . O-mi-hi-præteritos . . . Et-ego-in-Arcadia" attitude which will send him on his way with redoubled satisfaction in his own youth and vigour. But it is nonsense to suggest that I shall be in any way depressed or soured by his ability to be over the mountains by sundown. The sooner the better as far as I am concerned. What matters to me is that I shall be in the white-fronted inn by one o'clock with ease—which is more than this poor old dodderer now approaching me over the bridge could manage. And he doesn't care about my glowing health and newly-pressed drill trousers. Why should he? He is on his way to patronize some even older crony who can no longer get out at all on a fine spring morning.

Dear me, these vernal longings are leading me into strange, un-Christian channels. But it is nice to be honest once in a while. At least I no longer desire, as men in their thirties do when April approaches, to beat all my neighbours at tennis or make a hundred runs at some poor bowler's expense. I only want to lean against this old stone parapet, delighting in the play of the sunshine on the cuffs of my new drip-dry

shirt (with spare collar, 63s.), and bask in the conviction that I am not yet nearly as old and desiccated as I was in January. It does not seem much to ask.

Even so, it is too much. I see now, on re-reading what I have written, that I have allowed myself a new Harris tweed jacket, drill trousers with creases, and a three-guinea shirt. Imagination has outrun discretion. It is not the expense I am thinking of, though there is that, but the impropriety. Youthful as I know I shall feel when this yearning to be elsewhere comes to fruition, it will still not suit me to dress like an undergraduate who has come into money. At that rate I shall be wearing buckskin shoes and a college blazer in my sixties and start rounding up adolescents for a game of table tennis. This strong

equinoctial craving for new clothes to match the rejuvenation of the spirit has to be kept in check. Give me a country suit with that gentlemanly run-in look, a shooting-stick, and a small moustache to match the touch of grey at my temples and let me watch the darting sand-martins with the level, faintly amused gaze of one who looks back without regret to his salad days, and forward with undimmed eagerness to lunch.

The picture is now complete. The river lisps and mutters pleasantly against the piers. The stone is warm to the touch. Everywhere the sap is rising, and in my deep heart's core there is a feeling that nothing, no feat of endurance or athletic prowess, is beyond me. Only I no longer care, if I may put it so without immodesty, to show off.



"For what it's worth, he's more hopeful of his Imperial Russian Bonds being redeemed than his Post-war Credits."



The Yogi of Kalyan

By HAROLD ELVIN

I WAS on a three-thousand-mile push-bike ride through India with four Indian students. We had arranged to meet a swami, a yogi, in Kalyan, in the Deccan. I went over to the house before my friends: it was very late and we were not sure that he would still receive us. He was a hundred and two.

The house was not impressive. It was like a poor tenement house in London built cheaply thirty years ago. While the lamp was on outside it meant he was still receiving. It was now midnight but the lamp was still on. I went up.

There were then two possibilities. You could either sit "within the man's presence and feel the light of his presence" or, if you had a question to ask, he would answer it. I had questions to ask.

I went up three flights and there, on the concrete roof, under the full glory of the stars, propped against three massive pillows, was Jehovah: Blake's drawing come to life. An immense man, outrageously large, beating Blake's drawings in dimensions and picking his toes. He looked fifty-five, but might have been forty-five. There were some ten around him, "feeling his presence";

they thought they could go on for another six months with the light that his presence exuded to them. This giant was courteous and the smile never left his face for the hour and more that I was with him. When all except three had left the roof I asked my first question: "They tell me that you put yourself in a trance and that you were buried in a sealed box for a month without food, water or air."

"Two months," he said and picked the sole of his right foot.

"Would you," I asked, "say that during those two months you—to use bold words—were dead or alive?"

"Alive."

"And mentally aware and alive?"

"They said I couldn't do it. But after five years of practising in a jungle island with snakes and tigers and living only on berries, I made them bury me and I could."

"Do you feel that under Yoga you can get much further in your imagination than we can?"

"Much further."

"Can you possibly describe this state of advanced imagination that you get into?"

"After two months of breathing up

my right nostril," he said, picking his left foot, "I can breathe down my left nostril, but it takes two months of concentration."

I asked no more questions.

He said: "After three years of living only on milk and honey I can stand on my head for fifteen days, and sleep too: only it takes three years of concentration."

My friends came. We all sat round and they admired his physique. I said for a man of a hundred and two his skin was astonishing.

"You can feel it," he said, "it is milken, it is silken. After twenty years of thought, of purity and concentration, my old wrinkled skin fell off one day and underneath was this. It happened when I was sixty-five."

I did not feel it. He invited me to live with him.

"Where do you live?" I asked.

"In a mountain home."

I thanked him but said it would mean deserting these four friends.

"I deserted my wife," he got in quickly, "and three children. You should desert anything to find the truth."

All his toe-nails and finger-nails were painted scarlet: neither William Morris nor Karl Marx had had half his beard.

One of my friends said that Kabali had seen yogi who could take out their guts through their mouths and clean them with soap and water and put them back. Kabali had felt sick. Jehovah said he could do that. It had taken him eighteen months of concentration and living on leaves and curd.

We left, at least we began to leave. But one floor down we paused to watch what was going on, struck numb and dumb with horror. All the lights were out except for a dull red flare. There was a revolting picture of a princess called Ambamata in the foulest Victorian frame, all garlanded about. Before it was a tiny fire and pots of incense, sandalwood, "dhoop" and God knows what. Then came Jehovah's brother—a veritable giant of muscle and sinew—with his legs crossed. A dirge of an incantation went on and on. He fed the flame beneath the Princess—the Princess who changed her sex. By him was a heinous witch of a hag who silently fed him the necessary powders and chemicals at the necessary moments. The flame went all green, all blue, all purple.

The rest of the room which I picked out slowly in the blackness was like a dull, sordid, empty suburban room. For two hours, four times a day the man drivelled on: a man with a physique which should only have known action. Smoke kept blinding our eyes. On and on went that monotonous chant. The fire was fierce and crackled and hissed. Outside in the corridor before we got away we were stopped by the swami from the roof who invited me to stay; he wished to tell me about Yoga during the night.

The others stayed too and we went into a very large room. It was now one o'clock in the morning. There were couches and a feeling of spaciousness and well-being. The swami came down and tea was brought in.

Soon the fire chanter joined us. A deep voice he had, as perfect English as ever an Englishman could wish to hear, and he sincerely wished us to understand the goings-on. He told us of a book which would explain all that he did. Then the painted swami toe-picker repeated how many years of concentration and sacrifice were needed before you could stand on one leg for six months . . . repeated again the invitation to spend at least one month in their mountain home: but got no further with Yoga than that.

Pillory

A.P.H. invited readers recently to ventilate their grievances, offering them a column "as a regular arena for rebels." "Your moans can be about subjects great and small," he said, only insisting that they must be those of a reasonable man and that grumblers must be sure of their facts. Below are the first reactions; others will be welcomed.

MINORITY GROUPS

Not minority groups as such, because that would mean a pillory too large to bear thinking about, and I'd be in it. But the irrational and over-sensitive sections of minority groups invite, and get, my ire. One starts a story about an African, an Irishman and a Jew, and long before one can approach a dénouement there are the representatives of the Pan-Celt Federation, the Mosaic Council and the Polychrome League—all denouncing one as a humourless Fascist, White-Supremist, crypto-Cromwellian bully. Who do they think they are? Majority groups?

J. F. WELDON, ISLINGTON

CAVEAT

Could A.P.H. do anything about the manners of finance companies? I'm sure it's right for them to send a reminder to people who are behind on their payments in a hire-purchase agreement, but why adopt a dear-sir-unless attitude from the beginning instead of starting with a courteous it-may-have-escaped-your-attention?

This particular example is a gem. "If your payment is not already on the way," it says, "it has to be in our hands within

the next three days failing which it is only right to inform you that it is our intention to exercise our rights under the terms of the agreement." To a working-class family this might well sound like the trump of doom, though in fact the "rights" referred to were only in this case the right to go to Court. But what makes the letter so splendid is that it was wrongly addressed and reached the recipient long after the "next three days" had elapsed.

JANE STEWART, LONDON, S.W.

TOO HOT TO HOLD

Why should catering establishments get away with providing tea-pots and coffee-pots that have handles of red-hot metal, like something used in the Ordeal in mediæval law courts? It is often difficult not to drop one when you first seize it. Perhaps if people did let go sometimes, or at least *always* spilt the tea on the cloth, these horrors might die out.

ALICIA COBB, BRIGHTON

BECK AND NOD

Would you *like*, they ask, would you *like* to do this small thing, as it might be re-climb the steps of the Monument to retrieve that dropped handbag, pick up that parcel at the Edgware boutique on your way home to Morden, cleanse those Augean stables? It would be all right if they said Please will you, or Do you mind, but Would you like gives them this status of being some sovereign conferring an inestimable boon by mere gracious grant of privilege to serve.

STANLEY FIELDING, WOKING

Man in Apron by



IN THE POLITICAL PICTURE



An exhibition of paintings by Sir Winston Churchill opened last week at Burlington House.

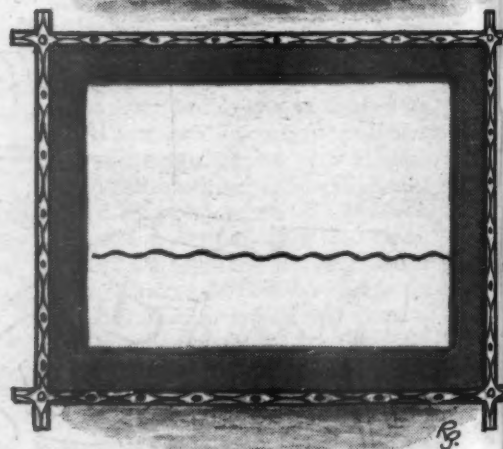
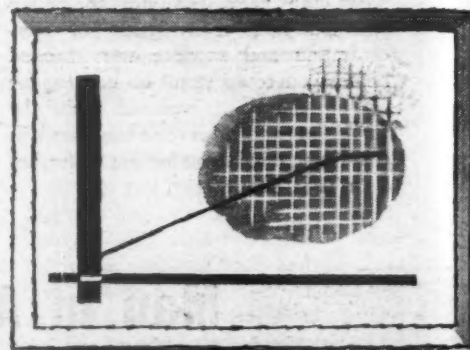
What sort of pictures would the other politicians turn out?

Nigel Nicolson's dim View of Suez dates from 1956. His even dimmer View of Bournemouth is of a slightly later period.



"La Constitution Française"—allegorical portrait by General Charles de Gaulle.

Below. — "Abstract, 1959," — by Iain Macleod, bears the sub-title "Unemployment."



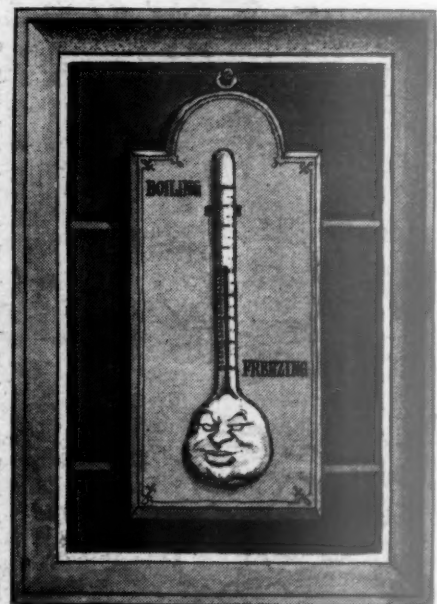
Above. — Typical of Lord Attlee's latest period: "High Peaks of my Life," in tempera monochrome.



This vast conversation piece entitled "Foreign Ministers in Conference," by N. S. Khrushchev, is in the traditional Russian realistic style recently seen at Burlington House.



A triumph of *trompe-l'œil* realism, this still-life by Deryck Heathcote-Amory is entitled "The National Cake."



Harold Macmillan's bold composition "Reconnaissance" owes something to Magritte and the early Surrealists.



HARGREAVES.

The Glory of the Garden, 1959

By LESLIE MARSH

ONE thing Kipling didn't know about when he said that half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees was the new multi-purpose tool that digs, rakes, sows, weeds, and, if you care for that sort of thing, scarifies. Another bit of this jingo's advice that sounds fairly foolish nowadays is to take a large hoe and a shovel also and dig till you gently perspire, when you can have this hand plough ("as demonstrated on TV") that will, as the leaflet tells you, "actually obviate digging altogether if used when conditions are right." Why, even in his day, Kipling preferred a shovel to a spade, except for scansion, I have never understood, but they both look half-hearted and amateurish by the side of this generous size tool chassis (again I quote leaflet) of rustless indestructible aluminium alloy; no welds to break or sharp corners to damage your crops, slots tapered to ensure snug fitting of all attachments.

I think we've got Kipling on the run now, because if there is one way a garden is made it's by singing "Oh, how beautiful," and sitting in the shade, whatever this imperialist says to the contrary, when "jobs that drag on for a weary three hours can be done—and done better—in an enjoyable thirty minutes, and even this time can be halved by using two attachments at once." There's a clear two and three quarter hours for sitting in the shade and singing "Oh," etc., or two and a half hours if you're content to plod along with just the one attachment.

You may think I'm developing a thing about Kipling, but I'm not going to have flag-wagging schoolmasters make any sons of mine recite or memorize "While better men than we go out and start their working lives at grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner knives," when they can read for themselves, without benefit of begowned pedant, that this fully tested and proved revolutionary implement

has hoes which in addition to row-crop weeding maintain an ideal growing tilth and conserve moisture in the soil (made of Sheffield steel with high shoulders to keep rubbish clear of the plants.) If that isn't better than broken dinner knives you can ship me somewheres east of Suez and I'll take Nasser and Nehru in my stride.

And then there was this bleak pre-occupation with hard graft for the sheer love of the thing. I invite you, in this century of the common or garden man, to look on these two pictures and see which you prefer:

1. *And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to harden
You will find yourself a partner in
the Glory of the Garden*
2. *So simple to operate that you can't
go wrong, even without any previous
experience whatever.
Used in much the same way as an
ordinary hand lawn-mower, you
merely steer it over the ground
at a gentle walking pace.*

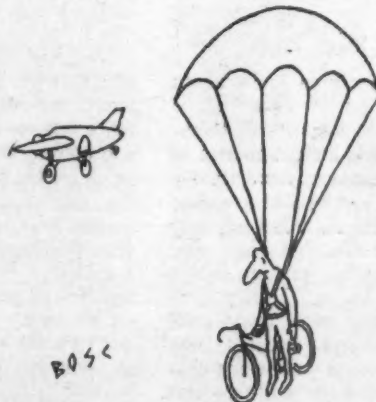
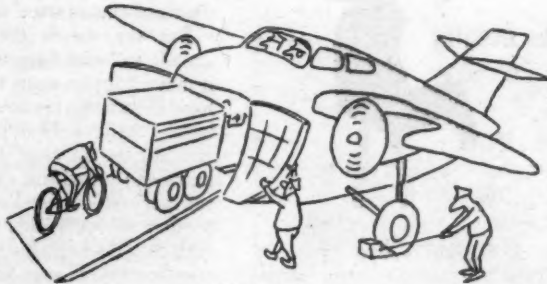
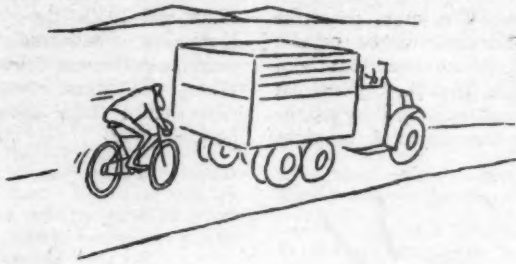
There's no need to drag in boots, boots, boots, movin' up and down again, because the brochure clearly answers the question "Can you avoid treading on the ground you have done?" with a "Yes, walking slightly to one side on the uncultivated ground . . . In any case only a fraction of the ground is stepped on."

Excellent herbs had our fathers of old, I don't doubt, in their rather clumsy way, but better ones, and more of them, are almost certainly grown by that satisfied customer of Langstone, Mon., who points out in a letter to the manufacturers "As I am a week-end gardener the time saved is a great factor in the success and timing of my garden produce."

There are other aspects of this apparatus to consider before, as the makers urge, you "wave happy farewells to the drudgery of old-fashioned gardening." It can remove weeds at any time, break up the soil, rake or

ridge it, sow seeds, cultivate between the rows, prevent weeds from growing, rake the lawn, convert to a wheelbarrow, pulverize lumpy soil into a fine tilth, earth up potatoes, provide aeration so essential for healthy growth and fit a flamethrower. That's a fuller life for a gardener than the barrack-room ballad-monger's invitation to seek your job with thankfulness and work till further orders. If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on borders. I won't refer to this man by name again but before I wash him right out of my hair I should just like to see that old canard of his, The Glory of the Garden, it

abideth not in words, measured up against the clear statement in A Personal Letter from Our Managing Director, beginning Dear Friend: "Every day my mail brings letters of congratulation and thanks from gardeners of all ages and from all walks of life." But then I wouldn't put it past that departmental ditty-dabbler, had he been confronted with all this promotion material, to have been one of the people of whom the Managing Director ruefully remarks "Nevertheless, it is still surprising how many folk still doubt our claims . . . If they would only stop to think about the leverage principle."



BOSK

Codicil One

THIS is a codicil
To my last testament and will.
The will, I fear, may comfort few, or
none:

The codicil will worry only one.
This body gratefully I give
Back to the land that saw it live:
And let the merry doctors use
Whatever bits of it amuse.

The liver, I dare say,
May well repay

A probe, in places,
Likewise the head and heart
That from a dismal start
Did win some races.

Then what is left, I beg you, burn
And set the cinders in an urn.

For my sepulture
Must not employ an inch of space
That may be needed in the race

For Housing, Zeta Six, or Agri-
culture.

Let not the urn be rich and rare:
The ashes will not long be there.

They will be spread
Upon the head
Of that fell motorist
Who has so often missed
His target by an inch,
But will one day
On the Queen's Highway
Make it a cinch.

Nor let the splendid dust be thrown
On one tremendous day alone

But pinch by pinch,
And once a week,
For many a moon,

On Monday, say, at noon,
The traffic at its peak
In Piccadilly.

Then every car shall halt and hoot
"He done poor Haddock in, the
brute,"

"He does look silly."

And should the fellow flinch
From this good plan,

My dear executors, give chase
And catch him where you can,
In office-chair or fond embrace,
Peru or Pakistan.

Won't it be fun?
Here endeth Codicil One.

— A. P. H.



Not Aid but Trade

THEY say that humanity has learnt a lot about the arts of applied economics during the past twenty-five years; may be—but it still has a great deal to learn. We boasted not long ago that never again would civilized and intelligent man repeat the stupidities of the 1930s and destroy good food while some were still hungry. Yet at this very moment Brazil is again doing the unbelievable—using unwanted coffee-beans as fuel for her locomotives. Thousands of tons of American butter have gone so rancid in Government warehouses that it cannot even be given away for ghee to the Indians.

In our devotion to the poorer, under-developed countries there is a wide chasm between words and deeds. Sir George Bolton, Chairman of the Bank of London and South America, has recently pointed out that Latin-American nations take a poor view of the policy of rich nations such as the United States when they keep out agricultural and mineral products in order to protect their own high cost producers. The United States have been pouring out financial aid to South America, but they have also been exporting agricultural surpluses on such give-away terms that agricultural countries such as the Argentine, which cannot compete with such generosity, have found their traditional markets snatched away from them.

Signs of equal economic inconsistency can be found nearer home. The chairman of the Chartered Bank, Mr. V. A. Grantham, has recently pointed to the illogicality with which we pour financial aid into South-east Asia and then when India or Hong Kong begin to improve their low standards of living by exporting cloth there is an immediate howl and request for protection from the low labour standards which, in the same voice, we say we want to see improved.

When the British textile industry complains that it cannot compete

against the low labour costs of the Far East, does it realize that it is putting forward an argument which can be and is used by United States manufacturers against Britain? As Mr. Grantham said in his statement to Chartered Bank shareholders, "This sort of reasoning strikes at the very root of international trade."

Meanwhile, countries like India which are being deprived of the full means of earning their keep and solvency are about to approach the capital markets of the world for more assistance. It is big money that they want. India alone, now beginning to consider the shape of the next five-year plan, has come to the conclusion that it will need to borrow abroad, preferably on non-interest-bearing terms, something like £300 million a year. The most powerful argument in India's case will be that she is an uncommitted nation and that there are ominous signs from the Communist south that this neutrality will be swinging against the free world if the plans

for industrialization are checked. In other words "Lend us the money or we shall look to Moscow for it."

Britain and the United States would be on stronger ground in answering this kind of persuasion if they showed greater readiness to let the Indians and other uncommitted nations earn their solvency and, therefore, their self-respect. The self-contradiction of Western policy is epitomized in two items of news that were announced on the same day last week. The first is that the United States are setting up a \$1,000 million Inter-American Bank "to help to remove barriers to the sale of Latin-American products." The second was the imposition of new and severe restrictions on imports of oil into the United States. Looking back to the 1920s and 1930s, the years before the Keynesian intellectual emancipation, we refer to them as "the bad old days." What will those twenty or thirty years hence think about our present performance? — LOMBARD LANE



If Only I Were

"SUPPOSING you were a horse, how would you enjoy being made to jump impossible obstacles with a man on top egging you on ever faster at each?" I have often been asked this and I have often supposed myself to be a horse—and the deeper I assimilate my equine personality the more insulting I find the question.

What can a mere man know about impossible obstacles? A tennis net is too big for the vast majority of them; but even among this animal species of feeble physical attainment there are one or two who might just be able to scrape over the Aintree fences. After all, only one fence is over five feet high—and that one, incidentally, seldom brings any of us to our knees. Horses have been known to take men over fences eight feet high—and without any trickery like jumping at a slant or twisting oneself sideways in mid-air—and

the record long jump for a steeplechaser is thirty-nine feet, nearly three times the width of the Aintree water-jump.

But the words that really rile are "made to" and "egged on." No doubt it is hard for humans to understand our love of racing, for a creature who can barely achieve 15 m.p.h. flat out over any but the shortest distance can never know the intoxicant exhilaration of real self-generated speed. Put a bunch of human two-year-olds in a paddock and they may do some funny things, but you won't see them race each other round it—it is not in their blood. Holding in, not egging on, is what we need, specially the hot-heads among us who regard the Grand National as a five-furlong sprint.

A glimpse of hand brings me to earth with a bump and I realize rather sadly that I am not a horse after all. Many a jockey has had the same experience. One moment he is intent on the job on hand, ardently judging his stride as fence follows fence, lengthening it here and holding back a little there; the next he is on his back cruelly severed from the motive force that propels him. Sometimes (and I swear that I have seen this happen) even this purgative is insufficient to dispel his schizophrenia and he will get up and continue the race on his own. But loose jockeys seldom get very far at Aintree. The course is too stiff for them.

— GREGORY BLAXLAND

Toby Competitions

No. 60. Got It Bad

PROVIDE the symptoms and/or treatment of next year's fashionable disease/ailment/complex. Limit 120 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on **Thursday, March 26**, to **TOBY COMPETITION No. 60, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.**

Report on Competition No. 57

(Sweet Are the Uses)

Competitors were asked to quote an extract from some manual dealing with the growth, treatment, preparation, cooking or other use of a new all-purpose vegetable imported from Venus. Many of a large and engaging entry did not get beyond cooking the thing in heavy water and deciding that its flavour was out of this world. Others became involved in producing greenhouse conditions similar to those on Venus. There were a few Grand Guignol entries, none of which managed the true horror-piled-on-horror. The prize is awarded to:

MRS. NANCY-MARY GOODALL

HALFWAY HOUSE

KELSTON ROAD

BATH

for this attractive vegetable:

COMPANIONABLE PLANT. Hardy globular bush resembling topiary ball. Ambulatory in habit and quickly finds compost heap, water butts etc., so normal horticulture unnecessary. Emotional, like all Venusian plants; needs affection. Flowers bright pink continually, especially on family birthdays, at Easter and for dinner parties. Fragrant. Likes to be used as table-centre, footstool, garden pillow, beachball etc: Fond children, dogs, elderly members R.H.S. Fruits delicious golden love-apples at Harvest and other festivals, Christmas, half-term etc. Amoeba-like self-division when emotionally torn, e.g. if keen gardener comes to tea or daughter marries, when new plant will attach itself to favoured person. Sometimes called *Vegetable Love*.

Other plants to earn book tokens are:

THOUGHTROOT (or Space Man's Parsnip). This Venusian visitor will soon win the heart of every busy housewife through its ability to turn into any vegetable you like to think of while it is cooking. To prepare, wash cosmic dust off under the cold tap, and pop into boiling water over a moderate heat, thinking of the vegetable you want all the time. For carrots and most other roots allow at least eight minutes deep thought. For peas and beans a passing thought is usually enough.—*S. P. Edgar, 63a Surrey Road, Peckham Rye, London, S.E.15*

Q. How would you treat the new vegetable from Venus?

A. 5% said: "Add a little to my husband's early morning tea. He can do with it."

5% said: "I'm against it. It's a political stunt."

4% said: "Put some of the juice behind the ears. My friend Monica says it works O.K. with the boys at dances and that."

3% said: "Send it to Professor Lovell at Jodrell Bank."

2% said: "Sleep with it under my pillow. My friend Monica says it makes her dream of Elvis Presley and that."

1% said: "With the utmost respect. It may have one of those little men inside."

80% said: "Same as any other vegetable. Boil it for hours and hours and hours."

Granville Garley, 15 Doric Avenue South, Frodsham, Cheshire

I have had a number of letters from readers asking about the vegetable Um-m-m, recently imported (under licence) from Venus. I grew this satisfactorily last season in a fine mixture of five parts cinders, four parts broiler-house scrapings and one part atomic refuse. Um-m-m is a rampant grower and wire netting should be sunk to a depth of six feet all round the plot.

The leafy top, if served in a really hot curry, does not taste unpleasant; dried and shredded it has no equal for stuffing mattresses. One soon gets used to the tendency of the rows of vegetables to whistle to each other in the small hours. After taking the mashed root regularly as a night-cap my seventeen-year-old son has grown a much-admired

crop of feathers on his chest.—*Mrs. N. G. Beeny, 28 Streatham Common North, London, S.W.16*

"... I would most strongly advise against letting your Sphongosaur help little Tommy with his eleven plus. I know it is not against regulations, but it would not be fair on the other kiddies. If it is bored, why not let it have the run of the cellar? It would clear out those rats in no time, and I am sure it wants to make amends for poor pussy. It must have been frightened the first time it saw an animal that moved, and I am sure it hit out unintentionally."—*B. D. Sylvester, Turret House, Park St., Windsor, Berks*

AN ALL-PURPOSE VEGETABLE FOR YOUR PURPOSE

Originally imported to this planet as an erotic stimulant, the Jojoy is gaining favour as a nutrient which increases the value of other foods. Jojoy makes you *Vital*.

To a new-laid egg add one Jojoy and pop into a cool oven; result, half a roast chicken. Two eggs and two Jojoys are recommended only to those who are interested in poultry-farming.

Mash up one Jojoy and leave it overnight in a tin of meat soup; result, *Meat*.

A pellet of Jojoy, swallowed after breakfast, will enable your husband to catch his train. *Miss Dismore, The Bourne, Connaught Road, Camberley, Surrey*

CHESTNUT GROVE

Charles Pears, R.O.I., now widely known as a marine artist, contributed this drawing nearly fifty years ago.



Little Girl. "THAT BUN YOU SOLD ME YESTERDAY HAD A FLY IN IT, AND MUVVER SAYS YOU OUGHT TO GIVE ME ANOTHER ONE."

Baker. "I CAN'T DO THAT; BUT TELL YOUR MA THAT IF SHE'LL LET ME HAVE THE FLY BACK I'LL GIVE HER A CURRANT FOR IT."

March 30, 1910

IT is a paradox of modern life that the *pied à terre* is so often high in the sky. Henry Sherek's Arlington House flat is on the seventh floor—a suitable height for a summit impresario. It was eleven o'clock in the morning, and Mr. Sherek's housekeeper brought in coffee and digestive biscuits. It was only a question of shifting three books, a French fashion magazine, and a framed print to find room to sit on the Louis XVI sofa, surrounded, it seemed, by loot from Sothebys.

The Producer produced himself on a genial gust. Dressed in a brown tweed suit, he carried his own mid-morning refreshment: something secret in a little jar, eaten slowly with a teaspoon; it could be Hymettus honey, or on the other hand, it could be something bitter-sweet for the good of his soul or his system. The French curricule chair in which he sat seemed frail for his imposing proportions; and the slim, feminine cigar he smoked gave the impression of being the fuse to a bomb . . . seven minutes after lighting it the man would blow up. The only doubt was whether he would explode in anger or in laughter—the eyes pale and angry, with buffalo brows; the rest of the countenance cordial, all but beaming. In youth he must have been a honey-blond; at fifty-eight his colouring is straw upon bricks.

The first explosion came on a question about the dressing of actresses for

FOR WOMEN



Coffee with Sherek

modern parts. Actresses, it seems, are at their worst in the fitting-rooms of their dressmakers. Their behaviour is simply shocking, with very few exceptions. Appointments have to be arranged after rehearsals, which is after the fitters would normally have finished work; but their fair clients are mercilessly exacting. Sherek knows, because he is there at every fitting; and it is he who chooses the dress house. He

sees the London and Paris collections each season to keep *au courant* with the mode and to assess the potentialities of the masters for dressing the mistresses, matrons, young misses, and near misses of the drama. Clothes, like everything else for the stage, have to be pointed up to carry them to the gallery. Their colour is chosen in relation to the stage settings, their fabrics in consideration of the lighting. Tone and texture values behave capriciously under the spotlights: satins become too shiny, hairy

fabrics too hirsute; black loses its total blackness.

"When a play has a long run, Mr. Sherek, do you re-dress your cast as fashions change?" The answer was no. When the time is the present, the present is the day on which the play opens in London. What emerges from Dior or Balenciaga thereafter does not affect it. But it has happened that a fundamental change in the line of fashion occurring between the provincial run and the London opening has forced a re-dressing of the leading lady. Whatever the social status of the character, the actress's sense of prestige demands that her clothes be made by a leading house—even though it is as difficult to make new and beautifully-made clothes look old and worn as it is to make a young, well-favoured actress look middle-aged.

The footlights shining upwards, so unrevealing of the lines on an older actress's face, are all too revealing in some of the views they afford to the stalls, and Sherek had some descriptive words to say on the problems short skirts make for producers: a straight actress's underclothes must never, never be glimpsed. But it was clear he no longer wished to *parler chiffons*. He is too volatile a man to keep on one subject or one chair for long . . . or even in one room. He must take you to his bedroom to see the Sargent drawing of his wife as a child, and back again for the Sabattier, the Houdon, and Epstein's *Narcissus*; then to the library for signed first editions to be pulled out, old family albums dragged from under the pile of books on a chair, and a proof copy of his forthcoming reminiscences picked up off the floor. These are called *Not in Front of the Children*. Such a title promises great indiscretions—far greater than could be hoped for at eleven o'clock in the morning in front of me.

—ALISON ADBURGHAM

Continuing Our Great New Romantic Serial

The Story So Far

Instalment II: Escape!

Jasmyne Phrayle, orphaned blonde who can twist her brows and has a three-quarter coat in pure cashmere jersey, has stopped arranging flowers and is torn between affection for Mark, heir to fire-blackened Hillcombe Hall, whose bedside she now leaves for the first time since the dome fell on him, and strangely powerful feelings for Gordon McTavish, rising young doctor whom owing to helping a chick-sexer she was able to rescue from a pothole the day the red-headed Cheryl kissed Sally's fiancé. It was while he was binding her foot with his tie on the moor that Jasmyne confided in him, as she had

done in Mark, that hard-headed Mat, business partner of dour Uncle Jem for whom she is keeping house, was pursuing her for the money she would inherit at twenty-one. Yet in the weeks between Gordon has neither called nor written. Jasmyne broods distractedly. It must be the memory of his mention of a Mayfair beautician he was friendly with that now causes her half-unconsciously to answer a Mayfair beauty salon advertisement for an assistant and leave her uncle for London. Coming face to face with her new employer, she gasps.

Next Week: The Search

Redbrick Ragtime

AS a student I plunged happily into the spirit of the thing—and into pouring rain—in my pyjamas, gumboots, spotted headscarf, large gold earrings and black eye-shade, rattling a sealed collecting-tin with wild enthusiasm. I acted in the Rag play, wrote for the Rag magazine and sold it in the public parks and station waiting-rooms.

It was my first adventure into money-making, and although the money wouldn't solve my problems, the acquiring of it satisfied my ego and detracted from the plutocratic sneers of friends who had left school to shorthand-type for seven pounds a week.

Besides, Rags were our Feasts, our Saturnalia, when Hall rules could be flouted and the dread of Finals pushed into a cupboard. The sight of one's room-mate taking a foam-bath on the town hall steps made even Beowulf worth while.

But having left my university to be a sober householder in yet another Redbrick city I find the glamour gone. Here, on a cold Shrove Tuesday

morning, I could weep with pity for those frozen Zulu warriors and near-Godivas, dithering at the bus-stops with the gleam of molten snowflakes in their hair. I try to fill their tins up rapidly with halfpennies so that they can rush back to their duffel-coats and Anglo-Saxon verbs.

Yet even so I am misunderstood. Around a corner I am mobbed by what appears to be a rocket-load of Martians, bellowing for the coppers I no longer have to spare. I give them hard-earned silver, and when the next mob strikes, some two blocks further on, I treat myself to an Immunity Badge—a move I used to scorn in other people.

Now that the city rocks with someone else's Feast in which I haven't time to share I grow impatient of delays. The start of a balloon race holds my car up for a quarter of an hour, and when I turn into the station yard I almost drive away again because the name-board reads "Llansomethinggogogoch." At lunch-time I become entangled in the Rag procession, an incredibly top-heavy,

lumbering monster, I now realize, of knockabout and water-squirting floats; and when I am tempted to proceed on foot I get a soaking and a bruised shin for my pains. Now for the first time I am sorry for those people that I badgered in my heedless youth, and I grow rather pink imagining what they must have thought of me.

Then the word CHARITY, writ large and red, leaps to the rescue from a Rag-Day hoarding. And, reaching for my purse again, I vow I *will* be charitable, even as a certain vice-chancellor was towards my husband and his friends when they decorated a chimney of his country residence in the traditional manner.

— HAZEL TOWNSON

☆

Handy Hint

MODERN mothers need the knack
Of a smart, old-fashioned smack
Such as purifies by pain
(Useful in a bus or train).
This is something I have tried
And really *do* feel purified.

— ZENA LOWTHSON

"You're not really being much help, are you?"



Motor If You Must

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

Further obstacles in the path of 1959's would-be road-user

BY "It," I mean the car. For the beginner in motoring there is only one It. Men returning home to find their houses wrecked by a mining subsidence rush into the ruins crying "Is it damaged?" and on learning that the car happened to be outside in the street at the time, and has escaped with cuts and abrasions, become their jaunty old selves and go around counting their blessings.

Undoubtedly the greatest single problem in choosing a car is choosing which car to choose. The blame for this must rest squarely on the British motor industry and its undisciplined rate of production, and until manufacturers can be brought to see reason, and just put one car in the window, like a Bond Street hat-shop, the new motorist will continue to be hag-ridden by the problem of selection. With over a million cars bouncing off the conveyor-belt annually this is some problem, and any guiding factor must, I think, be welcome. Pure considerations of dimension are more valuable than most people seem to think. Have a good look at your garage, shed or sagging asbestos hut and decide just how much motor-car you can get into it. It is surprising how many prospective owners are still shuffling wearily from showroom to showroom, auction to auction, arguing over makes and horse-power and boot accommodation, when a tape-measure and a few notes on an envelope-back would narrow the field in a moment.

DEALER: This is a very nice motor-car, sir. Automatic gear-change, built-in tape-recorder, one owner, only done 10,000, as new.

CUSTOMER: How long is it?

DEALER: Since what?

CUSTOMER: Since nothing. What's its length?

DEALER: Oh, I see. Twenty-three feet.

CUSTOMER: Useless. What's that one next to it, with "£40 Drive Away" on the windscreen in green paint?

DEALER: Very nice little motor-car, sir. Four cylinders, handbrake, steering-wheel . . .

CUSTOMER (*running tape over its blistered rump*): Ah, I thought so. Four inches over-width.

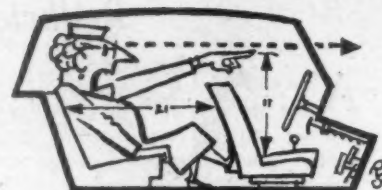
DEALER: The mudguards would come off.

CUSTOMER: I can see that. How much is that bubble-car under the second-hand ambulance?

DEALER: I'm afraid that's awaiting repairs, sir.

CUSTOMER: It's perfect for size. I'll take it. (*Gets out handful of silver*) What's the deposit?

Naturally, this system will be of no use to you if you propose to keep your car in a derelict barn with a fifty-foot frontage, fifteen shillings a week, only half an hour's walk from your home. In that case you must hit on some other guiding factor. A rough work-out of the family budget, with special regard to school fees, tax, bank charges and a fantastic allowance for the upkeep of the car when you get it may well introduce a purely financial element, which is as good-a narrower of the purchasing field as any. Once you see that December 31 will find you with a maximum of £14 in hand you will be able to concentrate your mind wonderfully. I do not advise you to buy a £14 car. I do not advise you to buy a car at all. But if you are the man I take you for you will go over your figures again and decide on a few simple economies. Take the children away from school, give up a few charities, burn the apple-trees instead of coal, cut down on the house-keeping money—simple measures of this kind will soon



2 How to Get It

have you looking down the small type in the motoring journals with perhaps as much as a couple of hundred in ready cash in your inside pocket. Most advertisers in the motoring journals prefer ready cash. Customers are apt to be back by taxi before a cheque can be got to the bank.

Two things, however, reduce the likelihood of your actually acquiring your car through an advertisement. One is severe eyestrain and a feeling that you must go out and read the nearest hoarding offering print in two-foot letters or larger; the other is your shameful ignorance of the jargon and abbreviations employed. In a list of forty-eight second-hand cars, all with the same names and birthdays, it is important to be clear on the distinction between, e.g. "o.o.o." and "o.n.o." The "one owner only" advertiser is a man stiff with proper pride, and resents being confused with the proprietor of the adjoining Box No. who sloppily says "or near offer"; try to knock him down twenty pounds on the stated price and he may well knock *you* down for nothing. Again, only a man who has lived and breathed the small ads can sense the finer adjectival shades; you, in your innocence, pay little attention to whether a bargain is described as mechanically perfect, in excellent condition, in good condition, or simply "10-h.p., black." When you first read that an offered property has just been overhauled by the makers at great expense you feel on safe ground; it only quakes underfoot when some sixth sense prompts you to wonder why, in that case, the chap wants to be rid of it.

After a period of bewildered groping in this strange new world you may decide to turn for help to a friend. To buy a car from or through a friend is strongly recommended, but only for a

man who has become sickened with the social side of life and is looking for a short cut to a hermit existence. I have seen twenty-years' friendships shot to bits in a moment, caught in the searing cross-fire of an argument over whether or not the spare wheel has had an old worn-out tyre substituted since the deal was clinched. A man has wept as he pressed an unresponsive starter-button, yelling "I never want to see you again," to the boyhood playmate who got him the car (through a friend of *his*) as a special favour, for old time's sake. This sort of thing only happens in the world of motor-cars. Sell your best friend a standard lamp that will only go lying on its side and he is only too ready to blame his electric wiring system or the daily woman; should he let you have a set of book-shelves cheap and you find that the tenons aren't equal to the weight of your bound Kipling or *Wisden*, you tell yourself at once that it is no fault of his; it is simply that your books are ridiculously heavy. True friendship can take a hundred knocks like this. Where the motor-car is involved, the lightest nudge means a feud to the death.

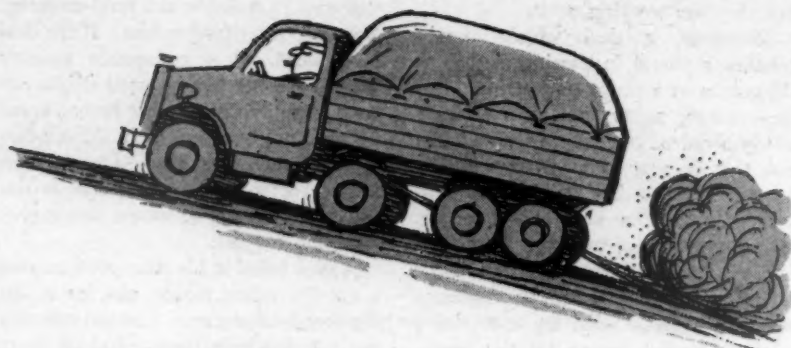
Psychologists don't know why this is, but they are working on it.

Moreover, a deal which merely brushes a friend in passing is just as dangerous as a direct transaction. For this reason, never admire a friend's newly-acquired car. There is always the risk that he may know where there is another one just like it. He lets slip, perhaps, that he acquired it at an absurdly low price from the estate of a dear old lady; she had two of them, but never used either, owing to lumbago; they have stood side by side in a centrally-heated garage for five years, only taken out on the first of the month by the chauffeur-gardener so that he could give them a good waxing and touch up the white sidewall tyres. The executors were in raptures when your friend took one of them off their hands, and are now at their wits' end to know how to dispose of the other. Naturally, you are over there the same afternoon, cash in hand, and drive off in the highest spirits. Five miles from home, in a desolate byway, the car rocks to a loud explosion and sinks by the stern. What your friend has forgotten to

mention is that the one you've got was once in collision at a level-crossing. You will never forgive him. If the deal had concerned a collapsible country cottage or a block of doomed shares you would readily assume that he had acted in ignorance but good faith. Motor-cars are different. In this case you are convinced that he is behind a tree as you leave the smoking wreckage, thoroughly enjoying the joke.

A man foiled in his attempt to acquire a car by other means can, as a last resort, buy a new one. I do not rule this out. It has been done. Indeed every car on the road has been new at some time or other, though this is hard to believe, considering how many hundreds of miles one travels behind what appear to be low-slung, wheeled sheds, held together with roofing-felt and trailing blackened intestines in the middle of the highway. Several factors call for study. Disappointment is one. In a small way this touches the Motor Show customer, who may feel cheated when the car he ordered at Earl's Court is delivered without the blonde who seemed to be part of its standard equipment during





the Show. But a car ordered from a local dealer can be just as disappointing. The period between the plunge and the delivery is a time of dreams; in the small hours of the night you see yourself whispering coolly along the great broad motorway, empty but for the occasional Ferrari you've left standing. Reality simply doesn't stand a chance when delivery day comes and you knock your hat off as you climb behind the wheel of a smallish, squat tin box whose doors shut with a metallic *plink*, if at all. The gears won't go in. There's no place to put your left foot. Body-paint is splashed on the front bumper. Everything proclaims that this was the three hundred and twenty-third car off the conveyor-belt that week, and on your first trip out you see the other three hundred and twenty-two.

This is all your fault, of course, for expecting too much. Your dealer, when you approach him about the loud shriek, nearside front left, or the impossibility of opening the ash-tray, will say as much—at least by inference. Draw his attention to the state of the welding, which seems to have been finished off with a mallet, and he will run his fingers cautiously up and down the frame of the driver's window. "You're lucky, sir, as a matter of fact. On these models we usually find we draw blood there."

On the whole, I recommend a car with an impressive list of owners in its log-book already. With these you expect the worst. When the engine throbs into life you are amazed and delighted. You had thought merely to own a car. To own one that actually goes is bliss. Your cup runs over.

Next week: Driving It

Resistant

THIS shop delights the eye—
Such things, and all so new!
But me, I shall not buy,
I am just walking through.

Watch me the way I pass
The clothes, the curtaining,
The china and the glass,
And never buy a thing.

How? Why, it's easy. I'm
A Credit Client here,
Still paying for the time
I just walked through last year.

— ANGELA MILNE

Essence of Parliament



THE only thing that happened on Monday was that Mr. E. L. Mallalieu came into the Chamber with his hat on. Tuesday was not very much better. Mr. Mellish and Mr. Fraser tried to make a debate out of the Army Estimates and Colonel Wigg tried hard to stop them. How difficult Parliament is these days! Even if there is something to say, there is always a good reason for not saying it. One would hardly have thought that there was any grave security reason why the House should not know why it was that Captain Shebbeare's V.C., won more than a hundred years ago, had been stolen from Sandhurst, but apparently there was. This dread secret was to be confided in confidence by Mr. Fraser to Colonel Wigg after the debate, but we, poor taxpayers, were never to know it. Question-time was a bit more lively than the Orders of the Day. There was a substantial bombardment of the champions of the Colonial Office (Mr. Lennox-Boyd and Mr. Julian Amery) by Mr. Callaghan, Sir Lynn Ungood-Thomas, Mr. Fenner Brockway, and all the rest of the boys. Mr. Patrick Wall rallied to the Government's defence. Mr. Lennox-Boyd is pretty used to this sort of thing by now and has evolved a technique to deal with it.

He will not have an inquiry into the position in Kano because the situation is so improved that it is not necessary. He will not have an inquiry into the position in Nyasaland because the situation is so disturbed that it is not prudent. When they ask him about the past he says that he prefers to look to the future. There is no getting by such a guard as that. Mr. Julian Amery answers clearly and bravely, but he has not yet evolved such a technique. He still likes to have the last word, and that sometimes lands one in trouble.

Then we turned from all that, in the way that the House does, to Mr. Glenvil Hall pleading for a National Theatre on the adjournment. I am not much moved by his plea that we alone in Britain have nothing that is called a National Theatre. St. James's Theatre proved that there are more theatres in the metropolis than its inhabitants know what to do with. On the other hand there are scandalously few in the provinces. It is admitted that the National Theatre will have to be subsidized. If there is money to spare I would sooner spend it on giving some decent plays to the provinces.

While Monday and Tuesday were just dull, Wednesday showed us why they were dull. It did not start off too badly. Mr. Macmillan, passing through, looked in and delivered a crack or two about American trading methods which

he promises to redeliver in Washington when he goes to ask about President Eisenhower's toothache. Mr. Ernest Marples, who is just a little over-reaching himself in his publicity, was in hilarious form about the telephones. For the first time—and let us hope the last—a statement is to be put in writing explaining

to us the exact purpose of the telephone service, and facilities will be introduced to enable subscribers to chat more readily with the telephone girls. Ain't we got fun, and what bad luck on the many hundreds of thousands who have applied for telephones and have not been able to get them!

Then the House went into Committee about rents. Mr. Ben Parkin of Paddington Green moved a sensible amendment in sensible language, supported by example, to deal with the case of the impecunious landlord. It was a

reasonably distinguished Parliamentary performance. Then as soon as he sat down up must jump Mr. Mitchison from the Front Bench and say it all over again at intolerable length and far worse than Mr. Parkin for no reason on earth except to show that the Front Bench was in charge and so must stick its silly oar in. This is the kind of thing that

makes one weep over Parliament. What with all that and endless questions about advertising on Independent Television and Dame Irene Ward telling Dr. Summerskill "Really, you are an ass," it has been a pretty dull week in the Commons—so dull in fact that even Mr. Stonehouse coming back was not able

to make it duller.

The Lords have been a bit more lively—poor dears. So many distinguished field-m Marshals, admirals and air-marshals have been ennobled that one might have thought that whatever else it could not do the Lords could at least have staged a distinguished debate about defence. Or alternatively one might have thought that these gallant warriors would have thought it improper to express their opinions. Neither, in fact, seems to be true. So the defence debate was left to politicians who knew no more about it than Members of the House of Commons or any of the rest of us, and we did not get very much farther. But on Thursday in the Lords we had a real fandango of a set-to between Lord Alexander and Lord Hailsham over Lord Alexander's accusation that Lord Hailsham had bullied them in his speech on unemployment. I thought myself that honours were tolerably even. Anyway, a rough-house in the Lords was good, rare fun, and we must hope that that strange Chamber may live long enough to see many another.

— PERCY SOMERSET



Mr. L. J. Callaghan



Mr. Patrick Wall

CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

Health, Wealth, and Crispness

The Cornflake Crusade. Gerald Carson. Gollancz, 21/-

MR. CARSON's determinedly cheery account of how the Seventh Day Adventists founded the breakfast cereal industry and turned Battle Creek, Michigan, into a centre of religion, nature cures, and big business fills a wide gap in general knowledge. As one eats the stuff one's eye strays from the newspaper to the carton and there are even moments when one fiddles with the extraordinary things they give away; but one is, especially at that time of day, only dimly aware of the life-cycles of the Kelloggs or the significance of the word "Post" in "Post Toasties" or "Instant Postum" or, if it comes to that, of the difference between wheat and maize ("corn" the Americans call it) when the grains are malted and curled at the edges in a hot oven. Yet the extraordinary freaks who started the whole business are as fascinating as early fathers or railway pioneers.

The first food-reformers tended to take agin' foods without any carefully reasoned dietetic arguments. They simply attacked meat and coffee as poisons and praised grain and nuts. Views on diet tended to be based on revelations made in trances. The earliest Battle Creek naturists aimed at a life of spiritual, mental and physical health and the régime in their great Sanitarium—not, oh definitely not, Sanatorium—stretched from hymns to hydro-pathology and on to Health Koko. Yet after the first enthusiasm enrolments flagged, until Dr. John Harvey Kellogg took over the running of the establishment on behalf of the believers. He was a crank of exuberant talents, able to dictate hygienic journalism for forty-eight hours at a stretch, always ready to lecture the patients

on philosophy, endlessly inventing medical gadgets and purer foods. Unexpectedly he was not only a crank. He was a leading surgeon and medical scientist, internationally recognized for his work on the surgery of the digestive system, a man in the same class as Arbuthnot Lane. Gradually he won sole control; religious resistance to keeping up with science was out-maneuvred. His various breakfast foods were ingeniously devised, and marketed with authoritative promotional literature; but they were generally made by the hands of unpaid labour in a back kitchen.

The fortune was reaped by a brother, W. K. Kellogg, who had worked for years for the doctor without remuneration and who finally broke away and set up on his own, beating off repeated attempts to sue him into cutting the doctor in on his enterprises. W. K. concentrated on a few lines, cashed in on the religious and medical propriety suggested by the family name and made

a vast fortune by improved marketing. His closest rival was C. W. Post, who began as a patient in the Sanitarium and graduated into independent manufacture, specializing in writing advertising copy at a time when it was still only just beginning to be cunning.

Investment in the health industry became frenetic and Battle Creek became a boom town, before amalgamations and rationalization had eliminated the wild-cat cerealist. The Hibbard Food Co. Ltd. announced that it would manufacture cereal coffee just as soon as it could think of a name, while the Battle Creek Food Co., Ltd. had a name but no plant. Gradually sales methods switched from plugging the injunctions of inspired Elders and the warnings of naturopath physicians to tickling such human frailties as the desire for palatability or free toys, and soon advertising was beamed at the children of the family, who now fight at breakfast for the foods that sponsored their favourite television programmes.

Mr. Carson keeps a good balance between social history, dietetics, economics and sheer farce, though his notes occasionally seem to have got into the wrong order. There are some quite astounding quotations and a number of illustrations which look like illustrations. Mr. Carson firmly repels some old slanders: cereals do not contain raw materials discarded during lumbering or rejected by the animal population of Michigan. On the other hand, he points out quite firmly that the Sanitarium profits were much helped by the fact that, although grain costs less than meat, people are always prepared to pay for Health with a capital H.

— R. G. G. PRICE

POETS' CORNER



2. EDITH SITWELL

CHARMED LIVES

The Poet as Superman: A Life of Gabriele D'Annunzio. Anthony Rhodes. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 25/-

A kind of Italian Kipling with a dash of Baudelaire and des Esseintes, the precursor both of Fascism and

of Futurism, D'Annunzio has attracted remarkably little attention in this country. Both as man and writer he was three parts bogus, yet he managed, chiefly by his extraordinary brilliance as an orator, to impose the myth of his own greatness upon his compatriots. Mr. Rhodes, in this detailed account of his career, is content for the most part to present the facts without comment or analysis. The picture which emerges is that of a singularly unattractive megalomaniac, snobbish, vulgar and ludicrously vain; yet he was redeemed by his genuine physical courage (the Fiume episode would have been astonishing in any age), and by an endearing indifference to money. One feels inclined to agree with an early critic who remarked that if he had been D'Annunzio's teacher he would have given him a gold medal and a sound whipping. — J. B.

The Prince Consort. Frank Eyck. Chatto and Windus, 30/-

It was sad that Prince Albert should have been contaminated by Stockmar's deadly earnestness, for with even a little flippancy the English would have understood him better. And, as Mr. Eyck shows, we owe him much, for he detached Victoria from her proprietorial addiction to the Whigs and made certain that the Crown should remain above permanent party attachments. There were penalties; he threw his weight about abroad in a stream of personal letters embarrassing to the Foreign Office, and in his anxiety to guide the national movement in Germany into safe constitutional channels he was sometimes blind to the rest of Europe.

He was brave, shrewd and not altogether a prig. This political history of his twenty-one years fielding slip for Victoria is discerning and fair, and admirably documented. We think of him as a liberal influence, and for his period he was; it is the greater shock to find him thinking that nothing worse could happen than an accident that would put "the Crown and Government in the same boat with Democracy." — E. O. D. K.

Ethel Smyth: A Biography. Christopher St. John. Longmans, 30/-

On intrinsic merit alone Dame Ethel Smyth's creative achievements may not seem more than those of a competent craftsman, but placed against a field previously thought a masculine prerogative she herself emerges in the stronger colours of indefatigable fighter and most remarkable "character." It was not her fault that only *The Wreckers*, from a widely varied output, is well-known; she journeyed Europe unflaggingly to fling her works into everyone's face. Her importunities were not always in season—even the imperturbable Boulton turned her unceremoniously away when she left his performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* before the great final chorus so as to beard him straight from the stage.



"Yes, that should be about Ron's size."

On the personal side Miss St. John lacks the forthright style needed to portray this explosive pagan, whose capacity for violent friendship and intense enthusiasms are overlaid here with verbiage, long quotations and catalogues of famous names. More of Dame Ethel's own impetuosity would better have served her turn—"if she saw an empty basket, in went all the eggs immediately." — J. D.

Full Cycle: A Biography of Admiral Sir Bertram Home Ramsay. Rear Admiral W. S. Chalmers. Hodder and Stoughton, 30/-

It needed a war to bring back the qualities lying dormant in Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay after a clash of personalities and a determination not to be a mere cipher had caused his retirement. The events leading up to his resignation are dealt with in an almost cursory manner and suggest a somewhat romantic but hardly impish character. The biography then settles down to the Admiral's activities following his return to duty, brought about by Admiral Sir Roger Backhouse (whose personality had caused his earlier retirement). Responsibility for the British Navy's organization of the evacuation from Dunkirk, the North African landings, the invasion of Sicily and the liberation of Normandy completed the full cycle which evacuated the men from France and put our Army once more in contact with the enemy on French soil. — A. V.

NEW NOVELS

With a Flag and a Bucket and a Gun. A. H. Barton. Hodder and Stoughton, 12/6

This naval farce is gay, sentimental and nostalgic. An officer on a course at Greenwich who disapproves of push-button warfare finds his objections very practically seconded by the ghost of an

early-nineteenth-century admiral. There is competition for the hand of the commanding officer's daughter, some evil Sea Scouts, an amateur musical comedy, and various properties like one-wheeled cycles and boomerangs; but if the ingredients are not all very new the taste of the mixture is individual. Good comic writing and the teasing flavour of the author's personality make the novel continuously enjoyable, much more enjoyable than a summary of the story might suggest.

The chapter titles, all quotations from the text, are one of the book's minor attractions, e.g. "Jasmine, Jasmine, get back into the air-lock," "Minnehaha doesn't understand me any more," "There's a megaphone on my hat-stand." The blurb, unusually, mentions that the author is the son of an archbishop. He will be familiar to *Punch* readers; on the evidence of this novel he ought to be a find for film-producers.

— R. G. G. P.

The Chains of Love. Zoë Oldenbourg. Gollancz, 18/-

Mme. Oldenbourg imposed herself on the public by two mediæval novels, *The World is Not Enough* and *The Cornerstone*; then, to the surprise of those who expected a third in the mediæval trilogy, she produced *The Awakened*, a novel about France in the 'thirties. Now she turns to contemporary Paris in a powerful study of a girl and her lovers: a girl who twice betrays the father of her child, once to the Germans and once to another man. Mme. Oldenbourg does not create sympathy for Stéphanie as Colette created it, infallibly, for Léa. One cannot feel sad at the courtesan's life that at last stretches out before her; but one can regret that, even at the beginning, Stéphanie has missed her hope of lasting happiness. Her mistaken life is now of her own making. From the arresting first paragraphs this is a profound and stirring novel. — J. R.

The Oldest Confession. Richard Condon. Longmans, 15/-

This is an exceptional first novel by an American, a swift-flowing story of international crime—the prize is no less than a Goya from the Prado—that seems to contain all the materials for a film in the category of *The Third Man*. Its criminal is a master-thief, fascinated by the problems of time-and-motion planning, and too civilized a man to be prepared for the grim consequences of his failure.

The plot alternates smoothly between the ateliers of Paris and the upper crust of Madrid society, in both of which Mr. Condon moves with confidence, his art jargon as telling as his description of a bullfight. His narrative is exciting, its twists cunningly hidden; but beyond that this is an intelligent study of the philosophy of crime and of its effects on a happy marriage. — E. O. D. K.

AT THE PLAY

The Buskers (ARTS)
The Threepenny Opera
 (CAMBRIDGE A.D.C.)

KENNETH JUPP seems to have found his inspiration for *The Buskers* in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and in the early Cold-Comfort-Farm O'Neill. It is an awkward mixture, that reaches absurdity when his least inhibited character rolls on the floor with his mother-in-law. For this piece, and another as yet unproduced, Mr. Jupp has been given £500 by the Arts Council. The device of the-play-within-the-play is clumsily managed, the first part of it going on much too long. We feel tricked when at last its comedy breaks into the heavy, earthy melodrama of the second part.

These buskers are strolling actors, shabby and hopeless, playing to an audience that gradually becomes us, the real audience; among them is a mysterious family who have tacked on ten years earlier, searching for a lost father. They go through their miserable repertoire, disastrously, but on and on, until in desperation the family is persuaded to re-enact its tragedy. What this boils down to is that a glib young man seduces both daughters and their mother; the first daughter throws herself in the river and Papa, a saintly philosopher, walks out. The survivors join the buskers, in the hope of finding him again, the young man,

his mother-in-law and his sister-in-law bound together in a curious and far from happy *ménage à trois*. The actor who takes the part of Papa has only just joined the troupe, and for some unexplained reason acts as an avenging angel, killing the seducer. He cannot presumably have been Papa, and gone unrecognized.

All this is not quite so grim as it sounds. As gentle comedy some of the earlier scenes would be tolerable, if they were not pointlessly leading us up the garden. But the acting here is much

REP SELECTION

Bristol Old Vic, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, until April 4th.
 Playhouse, Sheffield, *The Elder Statesman*, until March 28th.
 Oxford Playhouse, *Dangerous Corner*, until March 28th.
 Bromley Rep, *The School for Scandal*, until March 21st.

better than the play. Patricia Jessel almost makes us believe in the mother-in-law, Patrick Magee has a fine dignity as the patriarch, and Gordon Gostelow is amusing as the worried little boss who does his best with such an odd menagerie.

I wrote of *The Threepenny Opera*, when it came on three years ago with all the Brechtian trumpeters bursting their lungs in its praise, that it gave the

impression of a bunch of undergraduates trying to show how clever they were; and so it seemed a good idea to go to Cambridge and see just what a bunch of undergraduates could do with it.

The A.D.C. have done a good deal, under the direction of Gabor Cossa. Its young orchestra handled confidently Kurt Weill's blowzy, tooting street-music, and its company obviously enjoyed the large demand for eccentric characters. The crowd-scenes had animation, and it was refreshing to note how many of the individual actors went on acting when the limelight was off them. Scenery was confined to amusing back-curtains by Stephen Mullin hung on an enormous map-frame and turned over between the scenes (this device was hallowed by the Master, and I don't object to it); otherwise the stage was bare, except for furniture as needed.

David Rowe-Beddoe was rather phlegmatic for such a dashing leader as Macheath, but once roused he could express himself forcefully and he sang with conviction. The Polly was charming, Catherine Buckley giving her humour and an attractively easy manner (how this polished maiden ever emerged from the Peachum slum was another matter). Indeed the A.D.C. appears to be unusually strong in girls. Shelagh Traynor as Jenny managed to look a sultry tart, and Lucy was played wittily by an actress whose name was omitted from the programme, and which in spite of an apologetic announcement I failed to get. I hope she will forgive me. Bill Wallis made Mr. Peachum a fine Victorian humbug, and Waris Habibullah shone as a darting Filch. Of Macheath's aides, John Mansfield and Hugh Walters stood out; they both have a quiet sense of comedy.

The love-scenes dragged a little, but no doubt the production gathered speed later in the week. It went down well with an audience from which only one drunken anti-Brechtian had to be removed.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

West Side Story (Her Majesty's—24/12/58), American gang-war musical with the kick of a mule. *Irma la Douce* (Lyric—23/7/58), French underworld musical. *Clown Jewels* (Victoria Palace—11/3/59), the Crazy Gang's latest frolic.

—ERIC KEOWN



Agata—PATRICIA JESSEL

Max—PATRICK MAGEE

Guido—GORDON GOSTELOW

(*The Buskers*)

PUNCH EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition of fifty years of *Punch* cinema cartoons and caricatures is on view, from March 18, at the Holloway Gaumont, by arrangement with the Rank Organisation.

The "Punch in the Theatre" Exhibition is at the New Theatre, Bromley, Kent, and Colchester Repertory Theatre.

AT THE BALLET

La Valse—Harlequin in April
(COVENT GARDEN)

THE ballet which Frederick Ashton created for La Scala, Milan, could scarcely have had a better setting on its first being seen in London than the middle of a glittering gala performance by the Royal Ballet. The beauty which made us catch our breath as the curtain rose, and was gradually revealed in its fullness as the stage filled with light, was due in unusually large measure to the scenery and costumes, designed by André Levasseur. *La Valse* has been inspired by a symphonic poem of Ravel's.

As the swirling couples weave their patterns on the ballroom floor the romantic spirit of the Viennese waltz seems to fill the whole house as though it would infect beholders and dancers alike. There is no display of individual virtuosity and, diversified by the occasional emergence of three of the couples, the ensemble is in continuous motion throughout, realizing every ballroom dancer's dreams of transcendent waltz.

Harlequin in April, commissioned by the Arts Council for the Festival of Britain and first done at Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1951, has now been brought into the Covent Garden repertory, though not yet completely adjusted to the larger spaces of the Opera House stage. It gets its effects by such fantasy as that in which Harlequin rises from the ground with the spring flowers but, representing human aspiration, leaves them earth-bound. David Blair does all that is possible in this small, inconclusive role. Stanley Holden carries off the honours as Pierrot—a pot-bellied comic who none the less wins the sympathy which custom accords Pierrot. A special interest in this early work of John Cranko was Antoinette Sibley's performance as Columbine. This young dancer, still listed among the *corps de ballet*, looked the part to perfection and danced with carefree grace and a happy air of enjoyment. Richard Arnell returned to conduct his agreeable music, and John Piper was at his most poetically imaginative in the scenery and costumes he designed for the original production.

— C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE PICTURES

No Trees in the Street
Carlton-Browne of the F.O.

I THINK a certain lack of enthusiasm for *No Trees in the Street* (Director: J. Lee-Thompson) can be traced to many people's irritating determination to see it not as a story about individual characters but as an argument on a theme. And that in turn has been encouraged by an adjustment of the ending (since the

film was first made—and indeed since it was first privately shown, a month or two ago) to make it more "optimistic."

Again and again I've expressed my belief that a real story interests and pleases by being about particular people, and that to judge it as a picture of types and typical situations, of some known "sort of" people who get or don't get into some known "sort of" circumstances, is wrong. I think the very popular criticism that may be summed up as "people of this kind don't behave like this" is no more justifiable than an objection to the behaviour of some fictional character with a beard on the ground that "men with beards don't behave like this." A story is about particular individuals who do behave in an individual way; that's what makes it a story. *No Trees in the Street* is a story about what happened to some characters in an East End street in 1938, and I regret the second-thoughts ending which has a policeman saying to a youth of to-day "That's how it was—things are better now." This, as I say, has simply encouraged a number of critics to declare that that *isn't* how it was or why, and disparage the film accordingly.

I don't pretend that this is by any means as good as *Woman in a Dressing Gown*, which had the same director and the same writer (Ted Willis). For one thing there is far more conventional melodrama in the story, which has a villain, or a near-villain (Herbert Lom), as well as the familiar old situation of the beautiful girl (Sylvia Syms) with the weak young brother (Melvyn Hayes) who takes to crime. Nevertheless the picture has excellent points. I always judge these things empirically, and I thought this entertaining and interestingly made as a film. It has, too—as well as Mr. Hayes's performance, which is notable and in places remarkably touching—one or two admirable character sketches. Outstanding is Stanley Holloway as Kipper, the bookie's runner. You will hear plenty of people laughing at him as at a straightforward low comedian, but Mr. Holloway shows much more in the man than that.

Again I have to warn you against the publicity. Take no notice of the misleadingly sensational picture in the advertisements; in the film, that scene is tiny and quite unimportant.

I had expected to be a good deal irritated by *Carlton-Browne of the F.O.* (Directors: Jeffrey Dell and Roy Boulting), knowing that it offered once more that opportunity British audiences so love to be given—the opportunity to show what good sports they are and how ready they are ("unlike other races," of course) to laugh at themselves. And the targets here, when you reflect, are all the old easy ones, the safe ones, with which the public feels quite at ease because it now—after all these years—knows that it is correct to laugh at them: pompous officialdom and official pomp, diplomatic



[Carlton-Browne of the F.O.]

Amphibulos—PETER SELLERS
Carlton-Browne—TERRY-THOMAS

and military routine and lack of imagination, upper-class superciliousness, the English breakfast-table . . . and so on.

Nevertheless here again I must state the plain fact that I was entertained, in spite of the simplicity and familiarity of much of the fun. The basic joke, as so often, is incompetence: Terry-Thomas is a Foreign Office dimwit sent as Special Ambassador to a small island state where he makes a mess of everything. The piece is too bitty and disconnected, and I think it was a mistake to show military operations with explosions that look no less dangerous than those in a serious war film, but there are quite a lot of excellent moments, comic detail and amusing lines.

* * * * *

Survey
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Also in London: *The Black Orchid*, with Sophia Loren and Anthony Quinn as N.Y. Italians: nothing special, but interesting, with echoes of *The Rose Tattoo*. The fine Greek film *A Matter of Dignity* (11/3/59) continues, and *Separate Tables* (25/2/59), and *Room at the Top*

(4/2/59), and *Gigi* (18/2/59), and *La Grande Illusion* with *March to Aldermaston* ("Survey," 25/2/59).

Most recommendable release: *The Horse's Mouth* (18/2/59). *Rally Round the Flag, Boys!* (25/2/59) is often extremely funny. *The Lady is a Square* (11/2/59) is a sham fight between "classical" and "pop" music. — RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE GALLERY

A Joyride in a Paint Box

I CARRY an agreeable memory of a moment after the last war when I witnessed emerging from a Chelsea colour shop, his arms full of paints, brushes, canvases, etc., as pleased as a schoolboy—if I may respectfully say so—none other than Field-Marshal Lord Alexander. "That," I said, "must be the result of the example of Sir Winston Churchill." When in 1948 Sir Winston's essay "Painting as a Pastime" appeared in book form, frustrated stockbrokers and other businessmen came down like a pack of wolves on the colourmen and soon had cleared their shelves of the last tube of flake white or bottle of linseed oil. The present show at the R.A., a selection by Sir Winston himself from his accumulated works, numbering over five hundred canvases, will even further swell the ranks of those who wish to have a go themselves.

Where does Sir Winston stand as a painter? On this point, curiously enough, two such disparate entities as the R.A. and Picasso seem near agreement: the R.A. by admitting him—originally anonymously—as an exhibitor, and now as an R.A., while the latter has said that Sir Winston could have made a living by his brush. He himself has written modestly what largely still holds good: "The truth and beauty of line and form which by the slightest touch or twist of the brush a real artist imparts to every feature of his design must be founded by a long persevering apprenticeship and a practice so habitual that it has become instinctive . . . we must be content with a joyride in a paint box." *Joie de vivre*, the keynote of his work, may well, if expressed too unrestrainedly, cause us to recoil—as does an over-hearty handshake or a sudden bang on the back from a boisterous acquaintance. My own choice lies in Sir Winston's quieter works "Snow at Chartwell," and "Menton from La Pausa."

As a contrast, the late Robert Bevan, whose oils were shown by the Arts Council last year, was one of a group, including Sickert, which revolted against all obvious prettiness of subject matter. His various studies of humans, landscape and horseshoe show him as a lively draughtsman and a delicate colourist.

Sir Winston Churchill, at the R.A. Diploma Gallery, closes May 31. Robert Bevan, at Colnaghi, 14 Old Bond Street, W.1, closes March 26.

— ADRIAN DAINTRY

ON THE AIR

Big Show

VAL PARNELL'S "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" (ATV) is scheduled to run for an hour each week. On a recent Sunday it started promptly at eight o'clock and finished a minute early. It was interrupted twice by commercials, which took up approximately five and a half minutes and were not without interest in the circumstances. By far the longest time was devoted to a peculiarly asinine extravaganza called "Beat the Clock." One way and another, I estimated that the amount of time actually spent on variety turns was about thirty-nine minutes (and I have thrown in the introductory and valedictory captions for good measure). I did not regard this as a fair proportion.

The show is televised from the stage of the Palladium, with the pit orchestra under Cyril Ornadel providing authentic variety-type music, and an audience (presumably invited) who give the impression that they would applaud with extravagant delight a selection from *Who's Who* read backwards by one of the electricians. If such eager and responsive audiences are really available it is hard to see why "live" variety should be a dying force throughout the land.

The star on this occasion was the American singer Connie Francis, whose performance was greatly to my taste. She had about eleven minutes out of the fifty-nine, and deserved more. She was presented without much fuss or fancy camera-work, in one of those typically meaningless settings which have abounded in the variety world ever since Ziegfeld got his hands on a drape and a couple of pillars. Apart from her act, and an all-too-brief routine by the peerless Tiller Girls, this glossy high-spot of commercial television's week was either dull or infantile. There was an aerial act, "direct from Las Vegas," which was neat and dainty enough: but high-altitude circus-work like this loses its thrill on the little screen. There was an entertainer (a Mr. Dainty, if I heard correctly) whose eccentric dancing would have made a good impression if he hadn't also told some uncannily humourless jokes. There was a fairly humdrum musical quartet from Italy ("top recording stars"). And, in the infantile department, there were fourteen solid, fun-starved minutes of "Beat the Clock." Let me say at once that there have been audience-participation romps which have plumbed even greater depths of sickening embarrassment than this glorification of a jolly time in Auntie's front parlour on *Boxing Night* ("by arrangement with Goodson and Todman and CBS"); but I cannot regard that as a sufficient excuse for its inclusion in a variety show. I can only assume that it is "popular," in which case I suppose my comment



[Sunday Night at the London Palladium]

BRUCE FORSYTH

should be that it was up to standard. Well, heaven help us, it was; and I daresay nobody was more amused than Goodson and Todman and dear old CBS.

The compère of this show is Bruce Forsyth. I understand that he has won a great following (much of his own act was devoted to telling us so), and I am glad for him. At the same time, I cannot believe that a compère should fluff quite so often when announcing the names of performers, and I doubt whether a vague resemblance to Tommy Trinder, a trickle of lame gags, a strange London accent and a matey grin are enough to keep an audience happy while the scenery is being changed. Unfortunately, if the audience on that particular Sunday night can be accepted as a fair cross-section, I am wrong. Well, I suppose that's possible. And anyway, the whole thing probably adds up to an absolutely splendid commercial for the Palladium.

I still recall with pleasure an hour (a full hour) of zany humour called "Gala Opening" (BBC), written and directed by Eric Sykes. There were moments which did not quite succeed, but I believe Mr. Sykes should be encouraged to turn out more of these surprising larks. As a comedian he has a unique style. He appears as a rather less polished lout than Frankie Howerd, and the gauche, fumbling, shabby, essentially amateur character he has created is quite fascinating.

— HENRY TURTON

New Brumana

By PATRICIA RILEY

"SO you miss the whole aura of Home?" he said, making his voice low and sympathetic. We were in the NAAFI at the time.

"That's right," I agreed, "the aura."

He got his notebook out. Discreetly, so as not to embarrass me.

"And Home was where?" he said, sounding all his aitches.

"I was born and bred," I said proudly, "on the Southwend Arterial Road. Between Gallows Bend and the Slightly-Used Car Mart.

"Oh," he said.

"I can see it now," I said, letting myself get a bit carried away. "There's the long stretch of road disappearing into the distance, with the occasional snug prefab. or asbestos-tiled bung. nestling by the roadside:

"And the people!" I wasn't ashamed of the throb of emotion in my voice. "The hospitality of the people! You can see it at a glance. Signs everywhere like 'Jack's Caf—good pull-up,' and 'Coaches Welcomed.'"

"A lively part of the world." His voice sounded real snob.

"Oh, real lively," I said, sort of yearningly. "I could wish I was back there this very minute, listening to the drone of traffic marking off the seasons. I'd know the summer noise anywhere—you know, those long, sobbing crawls in bottom gear when the queue stretches from London to Southwend, solid."

"Very tiresome," he said. If you ask me he was a bit of a pansy. Nevertheless I tried to make him see the reason for my being carried away.

"Oh, no, no!" I said. "That's just because you've never tied it up with the march of the seasons. Nature and her ways. The winter noise is ever so different now. Then you get the strange, almost animal screams of tyres skidding on ice.

"It's dead popular." I tried to give him a bit more information to write down. "Not just for passing through either. In summer, high summer, whole families come from miles away to picnic by the roadside on the nice wide grass verge. You know, with deck-chairs, their own telly, the lot.

"The kids play about and the old folks sit in the cars snoozing. Of course with the windows closed, I mean all that carbon monoxide takes a bit of getting used to. Like ozone."

He looked a bit dazed, I thought, so I decided he'd been out here too long. All this sunshine can't be natural.

Probably something to do with atom bombs.

"But you don't need me to remind you of the scenes Back Home," I said in a cheerful voice.

"Yes." He still seemed depressed and muttered something about our Common Heritage.



"I'm afraid you'll have to stay another week. You've got hay-fever now."

You could see he was making a bit of an effort though.

"And what about your girl?" he said, being all confidential again. "Where was your special rendezvous?"

"Well, what better place than the old Arterial?" I said, thinking he was a bit slow. "You often see a bit of young love on the Arterial. A couple sitting having a bit of a hug by the roadside, or even lying entwined. But a mother's always happy to know that her girl's out with a clean-living youth on the Southwend Arterial. What harm can they come to, she says, with those car headlights blinding both of 'em every few seconds? Breaks up the continuity, see?"

I felt a bit more sentimental; after all it was a touching and sentimental subject—for anybody with feelings.

"Then when you're older, and married," I said, "you can still find solace right there on the Arterial. If you want to get away from the missus for a Sunday morning now and then, well, you go on one of Fred Wet's Mystery Tours. You stop at each of the countless good lay-bys until the beer runs out.

"In a nut-shell," I said solemnly, "you can say the Southwend Arterial is all things to all men."

"Wouldn't you like to live in the country?" he said, showing just how ignorant he was.

"But we do," I said with slow dignity. "We live in rural surroundings, but civilized."

I don't know why I bothered with him.

"If you mean fields and such," I said, with disdain. "Well that's just dead boring in my opinion. We notice them, mind you, stretching away beyond our chicken run, where the bedstead leaves a gap in an otherwise good, corrugated iron fence, but they're dead boring."

"But your—er—social life . . ." he began.

"Social life!" I said. "Can't beat

ours. We're virtually isolated on the one side of the road, see, in the summer. This makes us a close-knit, friendly community. Can't get across the road till winter sets in and the traffic eases up a bit. I dare say that sometime soon they'll start putting foot-bridges over the old Arterial, like they've done out Watford way. I'll be sorry in a way to see our community spirit threatened, but I suppose it'll be progress—which is what we all want, isn't it?"

Sex

WITHOUT a Sextant sailors are at sea.
Sextet sounds more refined than half a dozen,
And this year marks the Sexcentenary
Of John of Gaunt's first marriage (to his cousin).

Sextillions signify extreme plurality.

Sex is an office, mainly monasterial.

Sexisyllabic is unpunctuality.

Sexpartite is a television serial.

Sexagenarians seek Retirement Pensions.

Lent steels the Will ten days from Sexagesima,
Though steel production was of small dimensions
Until Sextupled by Sir Henry Bessemer.

A Sextary is briefly undefinable.

Sexfoiled, though unrepressed, are flowers (see Botany).

Sex is a Latin number, indeclinable;

To go on further would be sheer monotony.

— E. V. MILNER



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